University of Alberta

Creating Cruelty to Children: Representations of the Endangered and Abused Child in Nineteenth-Century Literature and Child-Protection Narratives

by

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A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in partial fulfillment of the

requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

in English

Department of English and Film Studies

Edmonton, Alberta
Spring 2006

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Your file Votre référence
ISBN: 0-494-13970-6
Our file Notre référence
ISBN: 0-494-13970-6

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Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to Dr. Peter Sinnema, without whose guidance, patience, support, occasional curmugdeonliness, and endless questions about genre, this dissertation would never have come to be. You've been the best supervisor that anyone could ask for, and have gone above and beyond whatever it is the position requires. Thanks for the many drinks, for the shoulder to cry on, and above all, for being proud of me.

Abstract

At the end of the nineteenth century, the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) claimed the credit for "creating" child abuse as a social and legal phenomenon. While the NSPCC's work in identifying, classifying, and disseminating information about cruelty to children was crucial to our current understanding of child abuse as a social problem, I argue that the Society's work was greatly indebted to representations of endangered and suffering children in the nineteenth-century English novel. This project therefore suggests that a necessary precondition for the emergence of child protection was a representation of the child as particularly endangered, as separate from the rest of human experience, and as inherently salvageable – a conception of the child largely constructed by and through literary texts. In tracing the indebtedness of the NSPCC's child abuse narratives to earlier literary narratives, I wish to examine the consequences of the codification of child abuse in legal and social-scientific discourse at the end of the nineteenth century. What aspects of child endangerment become lost or obscured within the new concept of cruelty to children? And what aspects of child endangerment remain, and how are they expressed in the emergent language of child protection?

My first chapter traces the symbolic "relationship" constructed between animals and children in nineteenth-century discourse. It is my contention that both "the child" and "the animal" were defined, in philosophical and literary texts, through their role as either victims or perpetrators, a connection which created both cooperation and competition between the RSPCA and the NSPCC. My second chapter examines issues of child performance, tracing the ways in which narratives

about the performing child helped to define what a child should be able to do, and how an adult should respond to it. My third chapter examines the role of commerce in the endangerment and abuse of children, with a focus on child employment and the debates surrounding child-life insurance. And in my final chapter, I analyze the NSPCC's discourse, and in particular, the emergence of social casework as a means of propaganda.

Acknowledgements

Throughout my years at the University of Alberta, I benefited from financial support from a variety of sources. I would like to thank the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, the Mellon Foundation and the Institute for Historical Research, and the University of Alberta for the support that has enabled me both to focus upon my studies and to carry out research in Canada and in England. I would also like to thank the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children and Nicholas Malton for allowing me access to the NSPCC archives. As well, I would like to thank Garrett Epp, Heather Zwicker, Kim Brown, Kris Calhoun, Mary Marshall-Durrell, Elisabeth Kuiken, Leona Erl, Marcie Whitecotton-Carroll, Shamim Datoo, and Carolyn Preshing, for the tireless work they have done for me and for all graduate students at the University of Alberta.

I have been extraordinarily fortunate in my committee members for this dissertation. Peter Sinnema gets the dedication, but he still deserves acknowledgement here as the best supervisor ever (I'm still looking for the mug). Susan Hamilton has provided emotional support, academic advice, and seemingly endless supplies of both patience and knowledge for which I will be eternally grateful. Raymond Jones has been an extraordinarily careful editor throughout this process (I'm sorry for any errors I'm sure I've included here), and has always provided incredibly important feedback on the field of children's literature and the history of childhood. As well, I would like to thank Catherine Kellogg, Cecily Devereux, and Katherine Binhammer, for the fantastic service they have provided during my exams and during my defense. And finally, I would like to thank Laura

Berry, whose own work has been so important for my own, and whose kindness and generosity managed to shine through even through a phone line.

Finally, I would like to thank all those whose friendship, support, and guidance has seen me through a chaotic five years. Kelly Laycock, Karine Hopper, Jennifer Shepherd, Christopher Grignard, Gaby Zezulka-Mailloux, Jan Olesen, Andy Weaver, Adam Dickinson, Laura and Roger Davis, Paulomi Chakraborty and Misha Munder, Joanne Muzak, Pauline Wakeham, Nicole Shukin, Antonia Smith, Maisaa Youssef, Janet Wesselius, Melissa Jacques and Shauna Mosbeck, Rebecca Helfer, Kir Kuiken, Jackie Currie, and last but not least, Vicki Vickerson and Symba Symberson. And to my family, even though they think I'm not a real doctor. Actually, I am.

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Introduction

In *The Queen's Reign for Children* (1897), William Clarke Hall writes that, prior to the passage of the "Children's Charter" in 1889, "there was no such offence known to English Law as the mere ill-treatment, no such offence as the mere neglect of a child. The Society resolved to create these offences" (159-60). Hall refers here to the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC), and to that organization's role in developing and disseminating the concept of what is now known as child abuse. While cruelty to children undoubtedly existed before the advent of the "Children's Charter," Hall's statement reminds us that it only emerged as a *distinct* legal concept in England in the late nineteenth century. Previously, as Hall argues in *The Law Relating to Children* (1905), it was true "that in some cases 'ill-treatment' might constitute a common assault, that 'neglect' might be an offence under the Poor Law Amendment Act, 1868, if it were to supply food, and if it caused *serious* injury to the child's health, and that 'abandonment' was an offence if the child was under two years of age, and if its life had been endangered"(27); he concludes by noting, however, "that such provisions were inadequate is now obvious" (27). Hall's assertion that the "creation" of cruelty to children emerged from a need for a single, unifying legal definition that would adequately address child suffering in England speaks to a transition in the conceptualization of child endangerment in which the NSPCC was deeply invested. That is, while assaults against and mistreatment of children prior to the "creation" of child abuse could be and were prosecuted under the same laws that protected adults, the passage of the "Children's Charter" lent to such acts of violence a new significance: not just cases of assault, but also of "mere ill-treatment" and "mere neglect" became reconfigured, under the new law, as acts of "cruelty to children."

The emergence of "cruelty to children" as a new type of crime depended upon and gave rise to both a need for NSPCC inspectors who could uncover and police it, and to NSPCC propaganda and casework, which described, classified, and disseminated information about what cruelty to children was, who committed it, and how it could be stopped. The social casework method – by which inspectors constructed detailed social-scientific documents for each instance of cruelty investigated – played a large part in identifying areas of concern, which the Society then presented to the government as proof

of the need for new and greater legislation protecting children. Moreover, such casework was reworked for publication within the Society's journal, *The Child's Guardian*, where case studies of cruelty to children were used to "pain the imaginations and grieve the hearts" of its readers, in order to "annihilate the bliss of ignorance of any but their own happy homes, putting them into some English child's place, to watch the ways of their parents, and see the effects on little minds and limbs which cannot much longer bear them" (Waugh, "Our New Year" 1). These case studies demonstrated to the English reading public both the need for intervention on behalf of abused children, and the effectiveness of the NSPCC in providing such protection. Since it was through these published case studies that the NSPCC succeeded in making cruelty to children an immediate and recognizable concern in English society, the concept of child protection (by which I refer to both the rhetorical and the policing strategies of identifying, preventing, and punishing cruelty to children)[1] was as much constructed by popular discourse as it was by law.

Although "cruelty to children" became a crime through the work of the NSPCC at the end of the nineteenth century, a movement that created the abused child as a new subject of legal and social concern, the "endangered child"[2] had already been the subject of a much broader range of discourses and legal interventions throughout the nineteenth century. That is, while children who faced harm, cruelty, or neglect were definitively classified as abused children through the NSPCC's work and the passage of the "Children's Charter" in 1889, prior to that, child endangerment was constructed and understood in a variety of ways. The endangered child could be represented as a slave of British industry, as a victim of emotional neglect, as a companion of abused animals, as a savage street urchin, or as a dangerous criminal offender. Furthermore, while the endangered child was "frequently and often sensationally represented as an innocent imperiled by cruelties," these cruelties "were as likely to be administered at the hand of a relative as by an administrative arm of the state" (Berry 2). Consequently, prior to the passage of the "Children's Charter," cruelty to children could be understood as something other than the abuse of a child by a parent or guardian: it could be understood as a labour issue, as an education issue, as a health issue. Moreover, rather than being restricted to the legal or the social-scientific realm, the endangered child in nineteenth-century

discourse "cross[ed] generic boundaries with relative ease. A nineteenth-century reader was as likely to find an impassioned argument against child labour in Elizabeth Barrett Browning's poetry ("The Cry of the Children") as in a parliamentary blue book" (3). Representations of the endangered child were particularly common, I would argue, in the Victorian novel, where it was depicted in the factory, on the street, and in the homes of the poor and the wealthy alike.

In *The Child, the State, and the Victorian Novel*, Laura Berry argues that "about the time when child welfare and social work began to emerge as categories with recognizable and defining limits – the narratives of childhood distress that so dominated nineteenth-century fictional writing began to disappear" (164). This "relative disappearance," according to Berry, coincided with the invention of the "case history" (165), and from this coincidence she argues that "it is hard to dismiss the conclusion that, with the appearance of the formal apparatus of child welfare, the creative and complex use of the figure of the child victim was no longer so readily available" (165). The "creative and complex use of the figure of the child victim" to which Berry refers is the endangered child's representation in discourse as both a "liberal subject, a free and self-determined individual" and as "subject to the realm of the social" (4). For Berry, therefore, the importance of Victorian depictions of child victims is their ability to "represent a more able negotiation of the rapidly changing demands of early and mid-Victorian social arrangements, imagining the possibility of an 'equal' who crosses social boundaries in life and generic boundaries in discourse" (7).

While Berry's argument is persuasive and important, I am particularly interested, in this study, in examining the significance of the replacement of earlier representations of "child endangerment" with the late-Victorian invention of "cruelty to children." That is, I wish to examine the emergence of the NSPCC's conception of cruelty to children as a kind of case study for the moment Berry identifies, when, with the advent of the case history and the concomitant apparatus of child protection, narratives of child endangerment became codified within legal and social-scientific discourse. How do representations of the endangered child throughout the nineteenth century lead to the "creation" of the abused child in the 1880s? What happens when what had previously been represented in fiction becomes enshrined in legal discourse? What aspects of child

endangerment become lost or obscured within the new concept of cruelty to children? And what aspects of child endangerment remain, and how are they expressed in the emergent language of child protection?

That the position of children within English society was materially affected by the containment of "child endangerment" within new generic forms – and by its disappearance in others – will be a major aspect of my argument. Such an argument depends upon a two-fold focus on issues of genre and on issues of class. The omnipresence of the endangered child in the dominant literary form of the period, the novel, provided writers of fiction with the means both to imagine and, to a certain extent, define the nature of child suffering and of cruelty. Consequently, the emergence of genres like the case study both depended upon and (if Berry is correct) replaced these literary representations with "factual" narratives, narratives that differently limited what was "sayable" about the abused child and the new crime of cruelty to children. The following chapters, therefore, trace both the persistence of, and divergence from, literary narratives of child endangerment within NSPCC narratives of child abuse. An equally important question underwriting this study, however, is the role of class in representations of suffering and abused childhood. Throughout the nineteenth century, anxieties about the effects of capitalism on families and children figure largely in representations of child victimhood, and the children of the poor were often constructed as particularly endangered. By the end of the nineteenth century, however, the NSPCC would argue that "where parents are the criminals, all ranks and conditions of children are on a pitiable level – they are all penniless" (Waugh, Untitled 1). Along with issues of genre, then, this study will engage with the question of whether or not the emergence of narratives of child protection represents a significant departure from pre-existing, classed representations of child endangerment and if so, what role class played within the new category of cruelty to children.

History of the NSPCC

This study concerns itself with the emergence of child protection in England, but the concept of cruelty to children first emerged with the Mary Ellen case in the United States. In 1873, Etta Angell Wheeler, a Methodist social worker, discovered Mary Ellen badly

beaten and chained to a bedpost in her home (Malton 2). Wheeler approached the police and child-saving institutions to intercede on Mary Ellen's behalf, but to no avail, supposedly because "the right of parents to chastise their own children was still sacred, and there was no law under which any agency could interfere, to protect a child like her" (Radbill 13). Wheeler therefore contacted Henry Bergh, the President of the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA), and "as the result of efforts initiated by Etta Wheeler and Henry Burgh, a bruised and battered Mary Ellen McCormack was brought into a New York courtroom" where she was "represented in court by the Counsel for the ASPCA" (Malton 2). The judge "granted a writ *de homine replegiando*, a special writ provided for by Section 65 of the US Habeas Corpus Act, removing Mary Ellen from the custody of the Connollys [her adoptive parents]. Mrs. Connolly was arrested 13th April, and found guilty … of felonious assault against Mary Ellen on 21st April" (3). After this case, the New York State Legislature "enacted laws permitting the chartering of Societies for the Protection of Children. The New York Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children [SPCC], founded on 15th December 1874, was the first child protection organisation in the world" (3).

The Mary Ellen story is significant for a number of reasons, not the least of which is that the ASPCA's involvement on her behalf has been used – at the time, and in the present day – to suggest that animals received better protection under the law than did children. What the ASPCA provided in this case, however, was instead the willingness to become involved and to represent the child in court; the ASPCA did *not* represent Mary Ellen under laws that had been passed to protect animals (as some child protection historians have erroneously claimed).[3] In fact, no new laws were necessary, either to remove Mary Ellen from her abusive home, or to charge her caregivers with abuse. What the Mary Ellen case demonstrated, then, was not that children needed the same legal protection as animals, or that children necessarily required separate and distinct legal protection from adults, but that abused children required advocates to represent them under the law. In other words, the major significance of the Mary Ellen case was that "public conscience was galvanised as never before, and for the first time an agency was set up specifically encourage [sic] reporting of child abuse and to investigate and pursue

the interests of abused children" (3). The formation of the SPCC in America, then, represented the first step toward providing advocacy on behalf of abused children.

The success of the SPCC in the United States provided an "organizational blueprint" (Behlmer 52) for the formation of similar societies in England and in 1882, Samuel Smith, Liberal MP for Liverpool, "attended a local meeting of the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals … where he converted a proposal for the formation of a Dog's Home into an appeal for the defense of misused children" (53). The Liverpool Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children was formed as the result, making it the first organization of its kind in England. This organization gained immediate and influential support: from Baroness Angela Burdett-Coutts, one of England's premier philanthropists; from Hesba Stretton, an author of evangelical books for children; and from Florence Davenport-Hill, author of *Children and the State*, and a key figure in child education. As well, articles on cruelty to children began to appear in *The Times*, the *Pall Mall Gazette*, and the *British Medical Journal* (56-57). By 1883, child abuse and the need to provide protection for children had become a topic of public debate in England. As public interest in the issue grew, the Society began to emerge in numerous centres. London was an obvious choice for a local SPCC, as people such as Dr. Barnardo[4] had made the problem of London's street and slum children a matter of public interest (57-58), and in May 1884 the London SPCC was formed.

Benjamin Waugh, a former pastor, was appointed the Honorary Secretary of the London SPCC at its inception. Waugh had written several books and been the editor of *The Sunday Magazine*[5] before he took up his position with the London SPCC, which meant that, in him, the Society gained someone experienced in negotiating the world of journalism. Furthermore, Benjamin Waugh had ties to W. T. Stead and the "New Journalism,"[6] ties which ensured that "the young society received invaluable support from London newspapers" (Behlmer 83). This made him an excellent choice for Secretary, for while the Liverpool SPCC was founded earlier and had greater experience in the field of child protection, it was through the production of propaganda that the London SPCC emerged as the leading child-saving organization in England. Waugh was to become a seminal figure in the production of NSPCC propaganda, and in January, 1887, the London SPCC published the first issue of *The Child's Guardian*, a monthly

journal aimed at increasing public awareness and understanding of the problem of child abuse. In the opening editorial, Waugh argued that "Interest in children, and horror at what is suffered by them at the hands of brutal, ill-living parents is common enough, but it is largely without knowledge of the provision of the law for children's protection" (Untitled 1). The London SPCC addressed this lack of knowledge through the publication of case studies and legal cases within the journal, in the hopes of informing "such persons as are already interested in the condition of little victims of cruel treatment, wrongful neglect, and improper employment what they can and cannot do about these evils" (1).

The launch of this journal also served to provide the London SPCC with an "official voice" (Behlmer 82) and, importantly, with a space in which to defend its work. As George K. Behlmer notes in *Child Abuse and Moral Reform in England, 1870-1908*, "As operations expanded from a total of 95 cases in 1884-85 to 258 in 1886-87, so also did the risk of public censure" because "allegations of hostility to the poor threatened to discredit the organization in working-class neighbourhoods" (82). In response to such allegations, Waugh used *The Child's Guardian* as a platform to express his opinion that the Society's work was "no class work" ("Notes" CG 3:36, 224), and that it had "a single eye to putting down cruelty to children, which will be turned aside by neither the poverty nor the wealth of their wrong-doers" (Untitled 1). Moreover, the case studies printed in the *Child's Guardian*, particularly in the first few years of its circulation, worked to support this assertion, always depicting children and families from a variety of backgrounds, from the poorest of the poor to the very wealthy. Cruelty to children, according to the London SPCC, was a classless crime, inspired by "vile pleasure" and an "ill-conditioned disposition" (Waugh and Manning 696), and the battle to bring about greater protection for children was one which, the Society believed, superceded questions of class and poverty.

Although *The Child's Guardian* consisted primarily of often quite sensational case studies which served to define and delimit the problem of cruelty to children (as will be discussed in detail in a later chapter), it also included narratives about the differing success the organization met in the courts while endeavouring to bring parents to prosecution for cruelty. Through accounts of cases in which the Society had to break the

law in order to provide protection for an abused child, the journal served as a platform for the Society's efforts to bring about new legislation to further that aim. The London SPCC and the Liverpool SPCC both compiled handbooks on current legislation protecting children as a means of addressing the gaps within the law that affected child protection agencies. As Behlmer notes, however, "when Waugh invited the Liverpool, Edinburgh, and Glasgow societies to discuss possible parliamentary action, the London society had already drafted a concrete proposal. At the ensuing meeting, provincial delegates discovered that legislative confirmation, not consultation, was the order of the day" (81). Therefore, although the independent SPCCs in Liverpool, Hull, and Birmingham were also committed to bringing about new legislation, the role of the London SPCC in drafting the bill, and in developing a national presence through its expansion into the provinces and through the work of *The Children's Guardian*, meant that the proposed legislation became primarily associated with Waugh and the London SPCC.

In spring, 1888, "A. J. Mundella, President of the Board of Trade in Gladstone's third government and a skilled parliamentary tactician, agreed to take charge of the bill" (Behlmer 98) and introduced it to parliament on August 10th. The London SPCC supported the bill by distributing a letter "along with 10,000 copies of 'Street Children,'" an article written by Waugh, "to every corporation in England. This tactic produced resolutions in favor of the bill from 87 municipalities" (101). This tactic also closely associated the London SPCC with the new bill, and when the Act for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children was passed on August 26th, 1889, it was perceived by the English press to be the work of Waugh and the London SPCC, a fact that did not sit well with other SPCC organizations, or even with A. J. Mundella himself. As Behlmer records,

> One month later, Mundella reflected bitterly on what he saw as misplaced praise for the victory: 'Stead has deliberately set himself to ignore all the labor and sacrifice of Lord Herschell and myself in reference to this important measure, and to call it Mr. Waugh's Bill, and assume that all Mr. Waugh had to do was draw some vague and unworkable clauses and insert them in the 'Pall Mall' and they would go through Parliament in a breath. (108-9)

Mundella's comments are significant in that they, however "bitterly," acknowledge the role that journalism played in gaining public knowledge of and support for the new law. While Mundella undoubtedly did the hard work of pushing the bill through parliament, it was the work of Waugh and *The Child's Guardian* that created the crime of cruelty to children in the public mind.

The main provisions of the new Act (which was amended in 1894, and then repealed and re-enacted in 1904) were, according to William Clarke Hall in *The Law Relating to Children*,

> aimed at providing for the punishment of any person over sixteen years of age who, having the custody, charge or care of a child under the age of sixteen years, wilfully assaults, ill-treats, neglects, abandons or exposes such child, or causes or procures such child to be assaulted, ill-treated, neglected, abandoned or exposed, in a manner likely to cause such child unnecessary suffering or injury to its health. (27-28)

Such provisions were applicable to a wide range of activities and situations, and provided child-saving agencies with much greater powers to bring about prosecution in cases of child abuse and neglect. As well, the new law weakened those "liberties" – of parental rights, and of the sanctity of the home – that the London SPCC had particularly targeted as obstacles in their work to protect children. And finally, the new Act "did more than create new crimes; it also specified new tools for combating them. Its search provisions … were essential for penetrating that 'living tomb of ill and unwanted children,' the home" (Behlmer 109).

In the August 1889 issue of *The Child's Guardian*, Waugh wrote that the new law was "for all children" ("Prevention" 133), echoing again the London SPCC's view of child abuse as a crime that occurred in every station. However, Waugh also applied the inclusiveness of the new law to locale when he argued that "This law is for no borough, but for Great Britain and Ireland. Wherever the Crown rules, there, now, the child is protected" (133). Just as the Queen rules over all of Britain, Waugh's logic suggests, so too should one Society represent children throughout England, a Society that "knows neither London children nor Birmingham children, but only English children, and all of them" (133). Waugh's rhetoric here is not accidental, referring as it does, albeit

somewhat obliquely, to what Behlmer refers to as the London SPCC's "own quiet coup" (109). On May 14th, 1889, one month before the "Children's Charter" had been passed, the London SPCC had reconstituted itself as the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children. According to Waugh's article, printed one month later, the protection of all children throughout England under the new law justified the development of a Society with a national presence, and the newly reconstituted NSPCC did, in fact, set itself the task of administering and enforcing the new law throughout England.

The Child's Guardian played an important role in providing guidance to the police; as one chief-constable noted, "I have had all my sergeants into me three times for examination on their new powers, and I've read to them your CHILD'S GUARDIAN cases, and told them to instruct their men to look out for cases in the borough like them" (Waugh, "Police Notes" 16). However, the NSPCC felt that the police should not be the primary investigators in cases of cruelty. As Waugh argued in "The Police and Ill-Used Children,"

> Chosen to make raids on betting-houses, to deal with burglars and murderers, [the police] lack adaptation to the tiny and timid and helpless, who are without any, even in their own homes, to whom they can cling. It is the work of altogether different men to decoy these broken little hearts into confidences, and get a story from small, pale, dying lips on which a Bench can convict their wrongdoers. (53)

Though the NSPCC had led the attack on the "Englishman's castle," Waugh's criticism of the police as investigators of child abuse demonstrates the extent to which the NSPCC saw its own role as somehow negotiating the distance between the powers of the State and the sanctity of the home. Furthermore, the NSPCC's right to take upon itself such a task had been supported by the police in the months before the new law. According to Waugh in *The Child's Guardian*, "the new Chief Commissioner of Police, Mr. Monro" made the Society "the Scotland Yard for children" by ordering that "after the 25th of March, 1889, the force under his command, every case coming to their knowledge of actual or suspected unlawful conduct to a child, is to be immediately notified to us, for us

to make the necessary inquiries and to take necessary proceedings" ("The Police and Ill-Used Children" 54).

Besides the support of magistrates and the police, in December of 1889 the NSPCC also garnered the support of the Queen. Her patronage had great symbolic significance for the NSPCC, for although the backing of the law and of the police had given it greater latitude to carry out its work than it had enjoyed in its early years, the Society still relied on private funding. It bore the full expense of hiring inspectors, lawyers, and administrators, as well as the cost of publishing *The Child's Guardian*, and as the donations it received did not cover these expenses, the NSPCC was deeply in debt throughout the 1890s. Furthermore, the Society's reputation was damaged by its involvement in the deeply unpopular issue of child-life insurance (discussed in greater detail in a later chapter). Waugh instead blamed the Society's lack of funding, however, on the public's fickleness: "As the barometer is affected by the winds, our funds are affected by the turns of the public mind. Now it is a popular divorce suit, now 'Darkest England and the Way out of it,' now it is baccarat which diverts the attention of the nation, and, in each case alike, there is a fall off in our income" ("Notes" CG 5:7, 71). Waugh's focus on the sensationalism surrounding new and exciting issues as the cause of the Society's "fall off in income" suggests that he was only too conscious of the extent to which the Society's own success had benefited from the kind of sensationalism employed in its own journal. But his mention of Booth's *Darkest England* also demonstrates his recognition of the Society's dependent position as a charity. Though the NSPCC had taken on the role of administering and enforcing the new law, it enjoyed no particular place above other charities in England, and the emergence of organizations like the Salvation Army meant that the NSPCC had yet another charity to compete with for public funds. The Queen might have consented to be the NSPCC's patron, but such a compliment came with symbolic, rather than actual, capital.

During the worst moments of its financial crisis (in which the Society was more than £10,000 in debt and became, at the instigation of the Charity Organisation Society,[7] the subject of a government inquiry), the NSPCC publicly begged for a Royal Charter, for Waugh argued that "the work it is doing for children coincides with the functions of the Crown, for the protection of all infants is one of the most ancient of Crown

prerogatives" ("Our Plea" 29). This work, according to Waugh, distinguished the NSPCC from other charities since "none besides our Society is engaged in work which, by the Constitution of the land, is a part of the prerogative of the Crown" (29). This plea demonstrates the extent to which the Society recognized that the tasks it had set itself were, in many ways, beyond its power to perform. While seeking the financial and legal protection of the Crown, however, the NSPCC nevertheless insisted that its work could not be entirely assumed by the State, as "it would not be in the interests of its child subjects that it should do so, neither would it be in the interest of the State" (29). Because, Waugh argues, "an essential element in young children's cases is personal tenderness," the best interests of the State would be served by supporting the NSPCC (29). In an excerpt from *Sala's Journal*, reprinted in *The Child's Guardian*, Mr. Augustus Sala defends the NSPCC's role as a private charter, arguing that

> It is impossible to eliminate a certain amount of sentimentality from the work of the Society, and Governments are not expected to be sentimental. The enterprise had much better be continued as a purely philanthropic one; but, looking at the vast amount of good which it does, it is clearly entitled to an annual Parliamentary grant in aid of its funds. (Waugh, "Notes" CG 7:1, 8)

The focus on the necessity of "sentimentality" in child protection work echoes Waugh's earlier statements about the inappropriateness of police involvement in incursions into the home. While the NSPCC saw the necessity of invading the "Englishman's castle," it defended its own work by arguing that the State and the police had no place in such work.

Six years after first securing royal patronage, the NSPCC was granted the Royal Charter of Incorporation on May 28, 1895. This charter brought "the Society within the scope of institutions to which it is possible for a Chancellor of the Exchequer to make grants" (Waugh, "Our Plea" 29). Having escaped financial disaster throughout the 1890s, and having gained the official sanction of the Queen, the NSPCC, at the end of the century, had risen to a position of relative security and social legitimacy. Moreover, the Society's conception of itself in relation to the State had altered significantly during this time. From a small, feisty organization that pitted itself against the law in order to awaken England to the evils in its midst, the NSPCC had become a kind of parental

surrogate: a tender, caring alternative to State intrusions into the home, and a representative of the Queen, the figural mother of the nation. In 1897, William Clarke Hall, the NSPCC's barrister, wrote *The Queen's Reign for Children*, which outlined the various changes that had taken place in child life in England during Victoria's reign. This history, which was, ostensibly, a means of showing gratitude to a Queen who had done so much to protect "the most helpless of her subjects" in her sixty years on the throne, also served to place the NSPCC within a larger history of child endangerment in the nineteenth century. As Waugh states in the introduction to this text,

> Could we bring to the sympathetic imagination of the inhabitants of these Islands a picture of the conditions under which children lived in the year 1837, when the Royal lady, now in the golden ripe of her reign, a tender girl, ascended the throne, the result of the contrast would be a mingled incredulity, amazement, and thankfulness such as no other contrast of the reign could inspire ("Introduction" vii)

While the "thankfulness" this narrative is meant to inspire is owed to England's Queen, it is important to note that Waugh identifies "the great awakening of the nation to a true and full recognition of the rights of children" (vii) with the passage of the Children's Charter in 1889. By placing the Society at the end of a glorious reign marked by increasing care and concern for children, Waugh and Hall's history depicts the NSPCC as the sole inheritor of a grand tradition, begun with the anti-child labour activism of the 1830s and 40s, continued in the work on behalf of juvenile delinquents, and finally brought to fruition in the NSPCC's work on behalf of abused children.

In the Society's early years, it had constantly proclaimed to the English public that before the NSPCC's advent, England's children had no rights, no protectors, and no recourse to the law. It had presented its own work as unprecedented, for while animals had been protected since 1824, the Society argued, children had only belatedly captured the public's interest with the founding of the London SPCC in 1884. And yet in Hall's history, the NSPCC is placed as a bit player in a larger story – a story of heroic individuals, of an increasing social conscience, and of a great and beneficent Queen who inspired and presided over every major decision that affected the lives of children in England. After the battles of the 1890s, therefore, it would seem that the NSPCC was

content to present itself as the Queen's representative, rather than as a revolutionary organization that challenged the State. In waging the fight on behalf of the monarch for abused children throughout the realm, the NSPCC was not an interloper into the domestic space nor a rogue organization misusing public funds, but a servant of the "mother" of the English people. Its actions gained sanction from her "true, noble woman's heart" (*The Queen's Reign* 53) and rather than disrupting the family, the NSPCC became the protector of the ideal family – the English family, of which Victoria was the head.

From presenting its own work as revolutionary and radical, the NSPCC had evolved, by the end of the century, to portraying its emergence as natural, progressive, and historically inevitable. Furthermore, this alteration in the Society's narrative of its own emergence equally altered the narrative of the emergence of "cruelty to children" itself. In the early days of the London SPCC, cruelty to children had to be "created": it was an unrecognized evil, a pathology that only the work of SPCC organizations had brought to light. In Hall's later narrative of the Queen's reign and the NSPCC, cruelty to children is instead presented as a continuum – one which important figures such as Lord Shaftesbury[8] had begun to address in the earlier part of the century, but which had only fully been recognized through the work of the NSPCC. Child protection was more than the "creation" of a particular organization, and instead, became the category that subsumed all other concerns and all other discourses surrounding endangered children in the Victorian period. The NSPCC's work, in this final narrative, represents the end result of a century of labour on behalf of children, labour that would continue to be developed, extended, and perfected, but that represented the best possible means of addressing issues of child endangerment.

Childhood and Child Endangerment

The narrative of *The Queen's Reign for Children* is compelling, not least because it is so familiar. As late as the 1980s, theorists such as Lloyd DeMause would refer to the "evolution" of human society as something that could be measured in its progressively more humane and caring treatment of children.[9] However, the story of the emergence of the abused child as a legal subject, and of the NSPCC as a centralized body responsible for the surveillance of and legal intervention into the home, is also the familiar story of

the rise of social control in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The use of case studies, statistics, inspection, and categorization as a means of combating real and imagined social evils was not unique to the NSPCC, and has indeed become the primary method of monitoring and controlling populations in contemporary society. Instead of reading the emergence of child protection as the triumph of compassion over cruelty, or as a narrative of progress in the treatment of children within Western society, therefore, it can be read within the larger context of social control. In *Policing Gender, Class, and Family: Britain, 1850-1940*, Linda Mahood identifies "the late nineteenth-century child-saving movement" as "part of a massive intervention into private life" (2) by government and charitable institutions.[10] Such an intervention can be seen as part of what Michel Foucault identifies as the rise of "discipline" – i.e., the construction of new forms of information, and new ways of ordering and controlling space and bodies as a form of domination – in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. In *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, Foucault argues that "there is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time power relations" (27). In terms of this study, then, it is possible to identify the emergence of the NSPCC and its development of casework, by which it first "created" and then identified and prosecuted the crime of cruelty to children, as one such example of a "field of knowledge" which came to constitute a particular set of "power relations" in England.

Theories of discipline and surveillance fail to account completely, however, for the complexities of the emergence of child protection. While the NSPCC and its discursive and policing strategies can be understood as one instance of "a complex system of production and distribution of knowledge which, once in circulation, acquires a truth value placing it in a position of domination" (Leps 4), it is important to recognize that this "position of domination" was far from absolute. To align the NSPCC with state surveillance and intervention into the private sphere is to ignore both the NSPCC's own desire to preserve and protect the domestic space, and its own resistance to state control of child protective work. Furthermore, such a reading also fails to recognize the extent to which the NSPCC's own work both depended upon and was supported by existing methods of communal surveillance and discipline. Particularly within the working

classes, strategies for dealing with abusive parents existed prior to the emergence of the NSPCC, which the NSPCC drew upon while also asserting the single authority of its own interventions. And finally, while the NSPCC developed and promoted the genre of casework as the best means of identifying, controlling, and containing the problem of child abuse, it also drew upon existing narratives of child endangerment from a variety of genres that reflect varied and complex responses to the problem of cruelty to children. In examining the emergence of the NSPCC, therefore, I am interested not so much in identifying the NSPCC as a means of discipline and surveillance, as I am in tracing the residual narratives, tactics, and strategies that persist within and problematize the NSPCC's own understanding of itself and of the problem of cruelty to children.

I would argue that a crucial theoretical concept for understanding the emergence of the NSPCC is what Mary Poovey, in *Making a Social Body: British Cultural Formation, 1830-1864*, identifies as the "disaggregation" of epistemological domains. Drawing upon Raymond Williams's theories of cultural formation, Poovey describes the process by which epistemological domains – such as "the social" – emerge and eventually become separated from pre-existing domains, such as the "political" and the "economic" (7). These emergent domains do not "immediately replace their predecessors, however, but [are] mapped onto them in a process that entail[s] the negotiation and eventual redrawing of the boundaries between kinds of knowledge, kinds of practice, and kinds of institutions" (7). While Poovey's description of the emergence of epistemological domains has much in common with Foucault's theories of the rise of disciplinarity and surveillance – in both, new fields of knowledge constitute new power relations and new ways of exerting control – Poovey emphasizes the "incoherence that results from the uneven process of disaggregation itself": "Because emergent domains develop out of and retain a constitutive relationship to preexistent, or residual, domains, the rationalities and forms of calculation that are involved in new domains tend to carry with them traces of the rationality specific to the domain in which they arise" (14). These traces of a pre-existing rationality create contradictions, irrationalities, or "faultlines" (17) in the emergent domain, a condition that, Poovey argues, "explodes the idea that power could ever be monolithic or merely repressive" (18).

Poovey's elucidation of the process by which new fields of knowledge are mapped on top of pre-existing fields of knowledge does much to account for the contradictions and complexities of the NSPCC's rhetoric. While the emergent field of child protection developed concomitantly with new laws, new narratives, and new techniques of policing and surveillance, the NSPCC charted this new territory upon the previously mapped domains of the home, the family, and the public and private spheres. In tracing the emergence of the NSPCC's narratives of cruelty to children in relation to pre-existing narratives of child endangerment, I will examine the ways in which these residual narratives both lent support to the NSPCC's emergent discourse, as well as creating "faultlines" within its own rationality.

Poovey's analysis of cultural formation in the nineteenth century also serves to clarify, for this project, the evolving construction of the child in Victorian England. I understand the "creation" of the abused child in the 1880s to be the result of a conception of childhood that came into its own in the nineteenth century: specifically, that of childhood as a protected, carefree time and space that should be enjoyed by all children, regardless of class. In *The Children of the Poor: Representations of Childhood since the Seventeenth Century*, Hugh Cunningham argues that the distance between the children of the rich and the children of the poor was "emphasized and celebrated" in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, but "came to be deplored" in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. English society increasingly began to believe that "all children were … entitled to enjoyment of the experiences of what constituted a 'proper childhood'" (1), or, "the kind of childhood which was being constructed in the middle-class world" (3). This "proper" childhood was constructed around issues of dependence, as "Autonomy, both economic and social, was now an adult prerogative. Children's right was to a 'natural' childhood state of innocence and irresponsibility; any whose knowledge and responsibility were 'adult' needed rescue" (Davin 4-5). A child enjoying a proper childhood was therefore excluded from supporting the family financially, as childhood, it was increasingly believed, should be a protected space, free from the burden of labour. Instead, the child became "the repository for certain valued and post-Enlightenment traits such as innocence, liberty, and naturalness" (Berry 16). The emergence of childhood as a protected time and space to be shared by all children, therefore, resulted in the

transformation of the child from an economically useful member of a household to an "economically 'worthless' but emotionally 'priceless'" figure in society (Zelizer 3).

The emergence of "childhood" as a new domain overwrote existing epistemological frameworks for understanding youth and infancy, and as such, retained residual narratives about, for example, the children of the poor. The reality of economic and social disparity in nineteenth-century England meant that children of the lower classes were unlikely to enjoy what was increasingly conceived of as a proper childhood, and, judging from the omnipresence of the impoverished child in Victorian fiction and social discourse, this distance between children of the poor and children of the rich was a source of much anxiety. Texts such as the *Children's Employment Commission* (1842-43) and Frances Trollope's *The Life and Adventures of Michael Armstrong, a Factory Boy* (1840) deplored the conditions children faced working in the factories; Mary Carpenter's *Juvenile Delinquents* (1853) and Charles Dickens's *Oliver Twist* (1837-39) questioned the fitness of trying and punishing child criminals under the same laws as adults; and waif novels, such as F. W. Robinson's *Mattie: A Stray* (1864) and exposés such as Henry Mayhew's *London Labour and the London Poor* (1851-52) revealed the harsh living conditions faced by impoverished or orphaned children on the streets. That the children of the poor were so often represented as endangered in Victorian social discourse and fiction speaks not only to the existence of social problems brought on by economic disparity, but also to a willingness, on the part of the Victorian public, to see such disparity – particularly where children were concerned – as problematic and, ultimately, unacceptable.

This disparity in the experience of childhood was often registered through a discursive focus on the damaged, stunted, or prematurely aged body of the working-class child. As Harry Hendrick has pointed out, "the working-class child came to be 'known' primarily through observation of its body" (2).[11] When nineteenth-century child-savers looked at these children,

> they saw 'bodies' – that is to say, they saw children who were homeless or ragged; infants who were starved, neglected and sometimes murdered by paid carers; children who were hungry; children who were ill; children who suffered from mental and physical disabilities; children who were

> cruelly treated by parents; and 'delinquent' children who roamed the streets. (3)

The endangered child of nineteenth-century discourse is therefore often the embodied child – the child whose abuse, degradation, or suffering can be read through an examination of its body. Furthermore, that body is often used, by those who observe it, to register distance between the conditions of lower-class children and of the children of the middle- and upper-classes. As the desire to bridge this gap developed throughout the nineteenth century, the response to that body was increasingly one of intervention. Many of the social movements formed and much of the legislation passed on behalf of children in the nineteenth century – legislation, for example, that restricted child labour, banned the employment of children in dangerous performance, and protected children's health and well-being – can therefore be seen as the result of the "major and irreversible change in the representation of childhood" (Cunningham, *Children of the Poor* 7) that took place throughout the nineteenth century.

Although "the children of the poor" were often represented as endangered in nineteenth-century fiction and social discourse, they were by no means the only ones. In Victorian fiction, in particular, the children of the middle- and upper-classes were also often represented as victims in need of rescue and protection. The victimization these wealthier children faced, however, was not necessarily the same as that faced by their poorer counterparts. Because the new conception of childhood entailed not only increased material demands upon parents but also increased affective demands, anxiety about whether or not these demands were being met was equally a concern in terms of middle- and upper-class homes. Residual conceptions of childhood as a time of innate moral depravity, which were bolstered by the growth of Victorian Evangelicalism, meant that "the rule of fear" (Cassell, qtd. in Bannerjee 52) was the norm in many Victorian households, because, Jacqueline Bannerjee argues, many parents believed that "early struggles tend[ed] to strengthen the spirit in the end" (Bannerjee 54). In the early nineteenth century, this conception of childhood as a time of innate sinfulness had to contend with the emergent "idea of childhood as properly a time of happiness" (Cunningham, *Children of the Poor* 152), which by the latter half of the nineteenth century would become the dominant view.

The existence of these two contending views of childhood in the nineteenth century is evident in such works as Dickens's *Dombey and Son* (1846-8). Flora Dombey enjoys material wealth and security; her father emotionally neglects her, however, and as a result, her childhood is spent in loneliness and isolation. Bannerjee argues that Dickens's depiction of Flora's childhood "is by no means unexpected" (54) given the often harsh climate of Victorian child-rearing, but I would argue that Dickens's presentation of Flora as a victim demonstrates the extent to which such an upbringing, if not entirely unusual, was increasingly viewed as unacceptable. Furthermore, Dickens's representations of suffering childhood are hardly unique: Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* (1847), George Meredith's *The Ordeal of Richard Feverel* (1859), Wilkie Collins's *Hide and Seek* (1854), and later fictional texts describing Victorian childhood, such as Samuel Butler's *The Way of All Flesh* (1903) and Edmund Gosse's *Father and Son* (1907), all contain depictions of endangered childhood that focus less on physical discomfort than they do on emotional isolation or lack of love. The endangered child of Victorian fiction, then, was as likely to be a middle- or upper-class child suffering from emotional neglect and abuse as it was to be a lower- or working-class child suffering from physical hardship and deprivation.

What united children who suffered from physical hardship and children who suffered from emotional neglect was their unhappiness. With the growing acceptance of the idea that childhood should be "properly the happiest time in life" (Cunningham, *Children of the Poor* 134), a child's unhappiness became a sign of that child's endangerment. As James Kincaid observes in *Child-Loving: The Erotic Child and Victorian Culture*, "An unhappy child was and is unnatural, an indictment of somebody: parent, institution, nation" (80). Although the endangered child's body in Victorian discourse speaks volumes, therefore, so too does the child's interior state. This focus on the suffering child's feelings of unhappiness served, I would argue, to create a representation of endangered childhood that cut across class lines. Whether the child suffered from emotional or physical neglect, from starvation or from overly-stern discipline, the proof that the child was indeed not being provided with a proper childhood was measured through the child's interior state of unhappiness.

The Abused Child and the NSPCC

The possibility that every child, regardless of class, could be a victim was, as I have noted, a central tenet of the NSPCC's definition of the crime of cruelty to children. That such a definition was dependent upon the new conception of childhood Cunningham describes is undeniable, because the construction of child abuse as a crime that could occur in the homes of the poor and wealthy alike was only possible if a childhood without pain, labour, or hunger was understood to be something all children should enjoy. The inclusion of things such as "begging," "exposure," and "improper employment" as categories of child abuse testifies to this change in the social value of children, and demonstrates the extent to which the distance between the children of the rich and the children of the poor had become unacceptable. While the necessity for children of the very poor to beg or to go hungry was largely accepted as a fact of life a century earlier, by the mid-century, such a necessity was deemed unacceptable, and by the 1890s, criminal.

The NSPCC also included, however, categories such as "general ill-treatment," "immorality," and "other wrongs" in its definition of cruelty to children, categories that seem to engage with a broader understanding of child endangerment. That is, while crimes such as "begging" and "improper employment" are related to an understanding of the child as the victim of commercial or financial gain, crimes of "general ill-treatment" speak more to the child as the victim of dysfunctional affective relationships. The desire to hurt one's child becomes, in these categories, related not to questions of financial necessity, but to individual psychology; in other words, they are crimes of "feeling." This emphasis on cruelty to children as the result of individual pathology – of an "ill-conditioned disposition" (Waugh and Manning 696) – therefore allowed the NSPCC to consider its work on behalf of abused children as "no class work." Because such a disposition could be found in any home, in any class, and because all children were seen to be equally helpless, child abuse became a crime that cut across all social boundaries.

Because, however, the NSPCC included *all* categories of child abuse under the rubric of individual pathology, including those, such as "begging" and "improper employment" that had previously been understood as social, rather than individual problems, it placed all responsibility for meeting the new demands of childhood upon the

parent. Cruelty to children was seen as motivated by, at best, a failure to love a child properly, and at worst, an evil disposition, thereby investing the failure to provide a "proper childhood" with moral significance. As a result, the NSPCC constructed the crime of cruelty to children not simply in terms of physical or even emotional cruelty, but in terms of whether or not a parent or guardian provided a child with a "proper" childhood. To commit an act of cruelty to a child was to force or allow it to assume responsibilities that had come to be associated with adulthood (such as employment), or to refuse to demonstrate toward a child (either by an act of omission, such as neglect, or by an act of commission, such as physical maltreatment) what had come to be considered proper feeling. The NSPCC's rhetoric of child protection can therefore be understood as encompassing – under the new category of cruelty to children – the disparate narratives about child endangerment developed in mid-Victorian literary and social discourse, while separating those narratives from their social and economic context.

In my analysis of the displacement of narratives of child endangerment by the monolithic narrative of child protection, I wish to consider the consequences of this shift for both children and families in England. The NSPCC's construction of the abused child as helpless, defenceless, and innocent, for example, certainly served to make the child a worthy subject of social intervention, but it also limited what a child could do and what a child could be. And while mid-Victorian literary and social representations of endangered childhood placed the blame for a child's endangerment in a variety of sectors – the individual, the social, the commercial – thus imagining a wider sense of responsibility for providing a proper childhood for all, the late-Victorian emergence of the abused child placed such responsibility firmly in the domain of the individual.

Methodology and Chapter Descriptions

My focus upon the displacement of earlier narratives of child endangerment by the late nineteenth-century concept of child abuse works through an analysis of early- to mid-Victorian literary texts and late-Victorian NSPCC rhetoric. In my discussion of the endangered child, I focus primarily on literary texts because I believe that imaginative depictions were the dominant mode of representation for the endangered child in the early- to mid-Victorian period. This is not to say that social-scientific studies of

endangered childhood were insignificant or were not authoritative, but rather to suggest that the meaning and significance of the endangered child was still very much under construction, and that literary representations allowed for a more flexible, because imaginative, negotiation of that figure. Though a genre such as the Victorian novel was a vested genre that limited what was sayable about the endangered child,[12] it also, in its imaginative depictions of that figure, demonstrated the complex reactions to and understanding of a concept that was still, largely, under construction.

My analysis focuses particularly on Victorian novels, primarily because, as I have stated, the novel was the dominant literary form of the period. More importantly, however, the early- to mid-nineteenth century novel in England was incredibly significant in terms of developing new narratives about the plight of the lower and working classes and of the plight of the child. As D. A. Miller observes, "perhaps no openly fictional form has ever sought to 'make a difference' in the world more than the Victorian novel, whose cultural hegemony and diffusion well qualified it to become the primary spiritual exercise of an entire age" (x). Writers such as Charles Dickens, for example, though not engaged in writing what are now identified as "social problem" novels, nevertheless used the novel as a space in which to make claims on behalf of England's suffering subjects. Novels like Dickens's, that is, worked through the construction of what Thomas Lacqueur identifies as the " 'reality effect' of the literary technique through which the experiences of others are represented as real" (177). And no subject's suffering was more "real," more significant, in Victorian fiction than that of the child. Whether the endangered child was the protagonist of the text, as in *Oliver Twist*, or an exemplar of innocent suffering as in Gaskell's *Mary Barton*, representations of children in the nineteenth-century novel were crucial in the reconfiguration of the child as a worthy object of social intervention.

By the early twentieth century, the novel that engaged openly with social issues had become somewhat passé, and writers such as Virginia Woolf would complain openly about novels that "were interested in something outside" the book itself" (327). The work of representing the disenfranchised and the endangered in society was no longer that of the novel, but of social scientific discourse. Therefore, with the emergence of groups such as the NSPCC, the endangered child of Victorian fiction became replaced by

the figure of the abused child, a figure that was bound within and defined by newly authoritative modes of representation: the case study and casework. These modes of representation, I would argue, both engaged in the same debates as the earlier literary precursors and utilized and built upon similar rhetorical and narrative structures. While I am interested in tracing the persistence of the concerns and language of literary narratives of child endangerment within the new rhetoric of child protection, I am also intent on elucidating that which gets repressed or lost with the replacement of one dominant form of representing childhood peril with the other. Casework, connected as it is to a particular organization's own needs and interests, necessarily limits what can be understood or said about the object of its concern. With the emergence of this genre as the dominant mode of representing child endangerment in English society, I would argue, the meaning and significance of the endangered child itself became limited. The following chapters will therefore engage with the changing representation of child endangerment throughout the nineteenth century, culminating in an analysis of the NSPCC's child protection discourse. And because I am interested in the ways in which debates about endangered childhood in the nineteenth century surface and resurface, and are articulated and rearticulated, I will be focussing, in my first three chapters, on three broad themes: the child and the animal, the child performer, and the child as a victim of commerce.

My first chapter, "Savages and Innocents: Animals, Children, and Narratives of Cruelty," provides an overview of the changing construction of childhood in the 17th, 18th, and 19th centuries, through an examination of the "relationship" between children and animals. It is my contention that both "the child" and "the animal" were defined, in philosophical and literary texts, through their role as either victims or perpetrators of violence. In an examination of a variety of texts, including philosophical writings by John Locke and Jean-Jacques Rousseau, selected poems by Samuel Taylor Coleridge and William Blake, sections from novels by Wilkie Collins and Charles Dickens, and articles written by Waugh, I will argue that it is only through an understanding of how the child was conceived of as both similar to, yet separate from, the animal, that we can begin to understand the process by which the child as a feeling, vulnerable subject came into dominance in the mid- to late-nineteenth century. I will then examine the ways in which

residual linkages between animals and children served to support both the NSPCC's cooperation and competition with the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA), a relationship that greatly influenced the NSPCC's construction of the abused child and of the crime of child abuse.

In my second chapter, "What Eyes Should See: Child Performance and a 'Peep Behind the Scenes,'" I will examine the figure of the child performer in nineteenth-century discourse. If narratives that linked the animal and the child served to define what a child was, then, I will argue, narratives of child performance helped to define what a child could do. Texts such as Caroline Norton's *A Voice from the Factories* (1836), Charles Dickens's *Nicholas Nickleby* (1838-9) and *Hard Times* (1854), Henry Mayhew's *London Labour and the London Poor* (1851-2), and O. F. Walton's *A Peep Behind the Scenes* (1877), all concern themselves with the problem of the child's body in action and on display. Discourses of child performance, I will suggest, sought to negotiate between child labour and child play, and as such, forcefully demonstrate the transition that occurred in the nineteenth century between residual and emergent conceptions of childhood. However, representations of child performance also focus upon the role of the adult audience, and as such, serve to elucidate the construction of adult responsibility towards suffering and endangered childhood.

In my third chapter, "Cannibalism in England: Commerce, Consumption, and Endangered Childhood," I examine narratives that explore the relationship between the endangerment and abuse of children and financial gain. Such narratives, I argue, seek to negotiate between what were perceived to be England's two defining virtues: its commerce and its happy homes. Beginning with an analysis of anti-child labour literature, such as Frances Trollope's *The Life and History of Michael Armstrong, the Factory Boy* (1840) and Charlotte Elizabeth Tonna's *Helen Fleetwood* (1839-40), I will suggest that such texts work to transform a political and social scandal – the condition of labour in factories – into a domestic scandal, in which the destruction of affective family relationships is depicted as the true tragedy of child labour. By comparison, texts such as Dickens' *Nicholas Nickleby* and *Dombey and Son* (1848) demonstrate the ways in which middle-class homes can achieve a balance between the needs of commerce and the requirements of domestic ideology. Finally, I will examine the NSPCC's involvement in

the child-life insurance debate of the 1890s. In its attacks upon this practice, I suggest, the NSPCC argues that the lower- and working-class home should be permeable not by the demands of commerce, but by the influence and instruction of its own inspectors.

My final chapter, "Facts and their Meaning: The NSPCC and Narratives of Child Protection," examines the codification of the endangered child in child-protection rhetoric and the NSPCC's construction of child abuse as a secret, classless crime. While there is an evident connection between the NSPCC's "creation" of the abused child in the late nineteenth century and earlier interventions on behalf of endangered children, the NSPCC came to suggest that cruelty to children was not only a crime of which most people remained ignorant, but also one that its inspectors alone were qualified to detect. In an examination of various articles by Benjamin Waugh, and of the development of the Society's casework, I will argue that the NSPCC's construction of child abuse as hidden is connected to the Society's increased professionalization. That is, as the Society increasingly depended upon its own casework as a means of both comprehending the crime of cruelty to children and of representing it to the public, it began to suggest that only its own methods, and its own inspectors, were qualified to see, understand, and ameliorate the problem. Although such a stance supported the NSPCC's authority, it also posed problems for the Society in terms of maintaining public support for its work, problems which greatly influenced the ways in which child abuse was constructed and disseminated through the NSPCC's publications.

Notes

[1] This concept must be distinguished from "child welfare," which refers to broader interventions on behalf of children, focussing on things such as health, nutrition, and education, for example.

[2] I am using this term following Laura Berry's use of it in *The Child, the State, and the Victorian Novel.*

[3] In "A History of Child Abuse and Infanticide," Samuel Radbill claims that "They were able to have Mary Ellen removed from her parents on the grounds that she

was a member of the animal kingdom and that therefore her case could be included under the laws against animal cruelty" (13). As Nicholas Malton points out in "The Story of Mary Ellen," "Jacob Riis, in his influential 1882 book *The Children of the Poor*, said that animal welfare laws had to be resorted to in this case, but this does not actually seem to have proved necessary" (3).

[4] Dr. Tom Barnardo became involved with the "waifs and strays" of London in 1866. According to Hugh Cunningham, Barnardo "quickly became absorbed into the world of Ragged Schools, of the London City Mission, and indeed of the early societies which were pioneering the emigration of the young as a solution to the problems of the city" (Cunningham, *Children of the Poor* 135). With the establishment of Barnardo's Homes, Dr. Barnardo became one of the leading figures in child rescue, and his 'philanthropic abductions,' and his use of photography as a means of eliciting support for children in need, marks him as a pioneer in the field of child protection.

[5] Waugh published *The Gaol Cradle, who rocks it?* in 1873, and *Sunday Evenings with My Children* in 1881. He also wrote extensively for *The Sunday Magazine*:

> Published monthly, the magazine contained a distinctive collection of late Victorian writings on Christian, humanitarian, and philosophical themes, very much addressed to children and to adult readers around the Empire. It gave Waugh many opportunities to expand his exhortative and at times (to modern ears) sentimental writing for young audiences, many of his books first appearing in serial form in *The Sunday Magazine*. (Fletcher 13)

[6] Behlmer states that "As a valued member of Stead's 'team,' Waugh, and by extension his organization, reaped the benefits of the 'new journalism'" (83). "The New Journalism" is the name given by Matthew Arnold to the "historic shift" in journalism in the nineteenth century "from a press limited by its own traditions and the modest demands of its readers" (Wiener xii) to one driven by a new market composed of readers from all classes. As Joel Wiener describes,

> Technology was a crucial element of this New Journalism, for within a relatively short period of time (1860-1900), the electric telegraph, telephone, typewriter, high-speed rotary press, and half-tone block for the reproduction of photographs all came into regular use. Likewise the economic basis of journalism was

> transformed. Profits replaced ideas as the motor force of the new industry of journalism. (xii)

This shift in technology and the market also affected the content and style of news-reporting as "innovation became commonplace: bold headlines, gossip columns, sports reading, pictures, and 'news stories' whose appeal derived from a subjective interest in the evolving human drama" (xii). These "innovations" were not necessarily seen as improvements: many (including Arnold, of course) criticized the New Journalism for its resort to what they perceived as "sensationalism." The driving force behind this movement, W. T. Stead, was the editor of the *Pall Mall Gazette*, and a pioneer in the field of investigative journalism. In his infamous "Maiden Tribute of Modern Babylon," Stead went so far as to purchase a young English girl in order to prove the existence of "white slavery" in England.

[7] The Charity Organisation Society was founded in London in 1869 for the purpose of improving charitable relief by exposing fraudulent charitable schemes. Because of its development of casework and its role in "organizing" relief for a variety of causes, it is often perceived as the origin of the modern concept of social work. The C.O.S. believed that "indiscriminate almsgiving undermined rather than nurtured a spirit of self-reliance among the poor" (Behlmer 193). Beyond attacking mendicancy, the C.O.S. also pitted itself against charitable organizations that, it felt, were not making good use of public donations. It was on these grounds that the C.O.S. launched an independent investigation of the NSPCC in 1897, which alleged that the Society was mismanaged. The C.O.S. then "circulated this report to its district committees throughout England, advising them to redirect all reports of child abuse to local police" (Behlmer 147-48).

[8] Anthony Ashley Cooper, the Seventh Earl of Shaftesbury, was famous for his parliamentary "career of paternalistic and evangelical reform" (Finlayson 165). He was especially admired, in child-saving circles, for his work to prohibit child labour in factories and mines.

[9] DeMause famously opens his article on "The Evolution of Childhood" with the claim that "The history of childhood is a nightmare from which we have only recently begun to awaken" (1). He continues, saying that "The further back in history one goes,

the lower the level of child care, and the more likely children are to be killed, abandoned, beaten, terrorized, and sexually abused" (1).

[10] While I agree with Mahood that "public interest in children" spurred charitable interventions into the home, one cannot ignore the work done by nineteenth-century feminists to reveal the conditions of women within the home as an equally important factor in deconstructing the private domestic sphere. Two excellent studies – James A. Hammerton's *Cruelty and Companionship: Conflict in Nineteenth-Century Married Life* (1992) and Mary Lydon Stanley's *Feminism, Marriage, and the Law in Victorian England, 1850-1895* (1989) – demonstrate the extent to which the conditions of women within the home were also used to "prise open families."

[11] Though Hendricks suggests that this visibility of the working-class child's body occurred "after the introduction of compulsory education in the 1870s and 1880s" (2), I would argue that child-savers throughout the nineteenth century focussed on the body of the poor child as a sign of the child's endangerment.

[12] As theorists such as Nancy Armstrong and D. A. Miller have pointed out, though the novel as a genre was traditionally "felt to celebrate and encourage misconduct, rather than censure and repress it" (Miller 1), it is important to embrace the "possibility of a radical *entanglement* between the nature of the novel and the practice of the police" (2). This is no less true of novels that seek to deal primarily with the private, rather than the social sphere, for as Laura Berry observes, "fictions that purport to deal with private life, particularly the private domain of the family, nevertheless intervene in public and social debates" (6).

Chapter One
Savages and Innocents: Animals, Children, and Discourses on Cruelty

James Kincaid argues that the Victorian era was "comparatively neglectful of the young in its reforms" (77), and as proof offers the fact that the NSPCC was not formed until 1884, "though the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals had existed since 1824" (77). In this observation, Kincaid echoes the concerns of Victorian child advocates; as one late nineteenth-century commentator put it, "It does seem anomalous that it should be easier to punish a man or woman for ill-treatment of a dog or cat than for cruelty to their own children; but such is the state of the law at present."[1] A mere recitation of the facts on both the development of anti-cruelty societies and the passage of anti-cruelty legislation would seem to support these assumptions: the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA) was founded in 1824,[2] with the first laws against cruelty to animals passed in 1835,[3] whereas the Liverpool Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (the first of its kind in England) was not founded until 1883, with the passage of the Children's Charter occurring in 1889.

These facts misrepresent, however, the actual status of children under the law in nineteenth-century England. Because they were represented under the same "Offences against the Person Act"[4] as were adults, children received protection from assault and injury before protection of any kind was afforded to animals. In *Forgotten Children: Parent-Child Relationships from 1500 to 1900*, Linda Pollock records a magistrate's response in 1824 to a defendant who thought that "every father had the right to do as he pleased to his own child": "the law must teach the defendant that this doctrine of his was very erroneous" (94). From her examination of newspaper reports of court cases from 1785 to 1860, Pollock concludes that the

> manner in which the cases were reported by the newspaper provides an indication of the attitudes of the time to cruelty to children. The fact that the majority of cases were found guilty meant that the law and society condemned child abuse long before the specific Prevention of Cruelty to Children Act appeared in 1889. Parents who abused their offspring were generally considered 'unnatural' and the cruelty as 'horrific' or 'barbaric.' (93)

Pollock's conclusion is further supported by other historians, who argue that the "brutal treatment of children was deplored" in working-class neighbourhoods (Davin 37), and that "a whole range of both formal and unofficial strategies for dealing with sexual abuse existed in working-class neighbourhoods long before … the founding of the NSPCC" (Jackson 31).

The fact that violence against and abuse of children in England was condemned – both in society and before the law – before it became a distinct crime in 1889 demonstrates the inappropriateness of citing the late emergence of the NSPCC as evidence of a widespread lack of concern for abused children. And yet, it is an enduring and deeply-held belief that English humanitarianism resulted in a "sentimental" attachment to animals which displaced proper concern for children. In this chapter, I would like to examine the discrepancy between the actual status of children and animals under the law, and the perception, as expressed by Benjamin Waugh in *The Child's Guardian*, that "if wretched children were only dogs, what sunlight would fall into their doomed and dismal lives!" ("Notes" CG 3:29, 84). I will argue that the anxiety latent in this statement – that English children were somehow displaced as objects of charity by animals – springs from a desire to assert difference between two concepts that had long been used to define each other. The emergence of humanitarian discourse in the Enlightenment period necessitated discussion of what makes humans both human, and "humane." Animals were often the object of this discourse, while children were the subject, because the concept of humane behaviour was linked to the desire to understand how humans initially responded to the world around them: whether "innocently," with a desire to do no harm, or "sinfully," with the desire to cause pain and suffering.

The separation of childhood from the rest of human experience in the late eighteenth and early-nineteenth century resulted, however, in anxiety about the place of the child in industrial England. The child now began to be depicted, like the animal, as the innocent victim of cruelty. Furthermore, animals and children began to be represented as companions in their suffering: as somehow sharing a common bond as blameless victims of an uncaring human society. This separation of the child from adult human experience, and its linkage with the animal was, I will argue, a necessary precondition for the emergence of child protection legislation. The linkage of children

with animals also, however, operated as a means of registering anxiety about the devalued place of children in society. In an examination of the emergence of humanitarian narratives, and of representations of animal/child victimhood in nineteenth-century literature, I will therefore argue that the close association of the animal and the child played an integral role both in the development of "childhood" and in the emergence of the "abused child" as a legal concept.

The Rise of Compassion

In *The Family, Sex and Marriage in England, 1500-1800*, Lawrence Stone traces the emergence of a "broad philosophical movement, which gathered strength throughout the mid- and late eighteenth century," that he identifies as "a growing antipathy to cruelty" (Stone 162).[5] According to Stone, this aversion to cruelty

> seems to have been concurrent with, and related to, the spread of Enlightenment ideas throughout Europe. Even then, it was at all times a state of mind confined to a relatively small part of the population. But it was a highly articulate and ultimately very influential part which slowly learned to employ all the devices of mass persuasion available in what was increasingly an educationally literate and politically open society. (162)

This "part" of society was "responsible for such things as the abolition of the slave trade, the suppression of most cruel sports, prison reform, and reform in the treatment of the mentally sick" (162).

Although one could find fault with Stone's ready acceptance of what he identifies as the "rise of compassion" as the primary cause behind a growing "antipathy to cruelty"[6] in English society, it can at least be said with some certainty that physical torture and abuse became increasingly unacceptable during the Enlightenment period (a fact that must be distinguished from the idea that human beings actually became less cruel after, or were more cruel before this period, an idea that assumes an evolutionary model of compassion that has little basis in historical fact).[7] The complexities of this change in social mores have certainly been argued at length, but what I am particularly interested in here is Stone's assumption that, "In its effect on family life, the connection between hostility to animals and to cruelty to children is clear enough" (163). Stone presumes that

his audience will follow along with this statement quite readily – that a society that is against "cruel sports" will necessarily behave kindly towards its children. His alignment of cruelty to animals with cruelty to children is based on his inclusion of both in the category of "the helpless" (163), and his assumption is that compassion to one will result in compassion to the other. This assumption is fundamentally flawed, however, in that it suggests that the "rise of compassion" Stone traces is concerned with the victim, when in fact, Enlightenment ideas were more concerned with the effect of cruelty upon the perpetrator. Such a distinction demands, I would argue, a reassessment of the place of children within early humanitarian discourse.

Children as Tormentors

Stone's alignment of "the suppression of cruel sports" with prison reform demonstrates his argument that cruelty to animals was closely related to cruelty to humans. He supports this alignment through reference to Hogarth's *The Four Stages of Cruelty* (1751) which, as the title suggests, traces the origins and development of a man's cruelty and lack of compassion. The series begins with a young boy's mistreatment of animals, and ends with the man's "reward" for committing murder (dissection, presumably after his own execution). Hogarth's "stages of cruelty" aptly depicts what many Enlightenment philosophers believed: that if, according to Immanuel Kant, a person "is not to stifle his human feelings, he must practise kindness towards animals, for he who is cruel to animals becomes hard also in his dealings with men. We can judge the heart of a man by his treatment of animals" (Kant 174). The antipathy towards cruelty expressed by Hogarth and Kant demonstrates not only, and certainly not primarily, a desire to protect the welfare of the animal, but more specifically, the need to cultivate and protect the development of a humane, civilized self. One of the earliest writers on animal suffering, Richard Dean, demonstrates this same concern in *An Essay on the Future Life of Brutes* (1767): "for a man to torture a brute, whose life God has put into his hands, is a disgraceful thing, such a meanness of spirit as his honor requires him to shun. If he does it out of wantonness, he is a fool, and a coward; if for pleasure, he is a monster" (Dean 157). While animals are "brutes," he argues, they "have sensibility," and to behave

cruelly towards them is to betray "the attainments of science," "the improvements of natural reason," and the "dispensation of religious light" (156).

Antipathy towards cruel treatment of animals was therefore motivated as much by the desire to construct the humane, civilized subject as it was by compassion. What is important to realize, in terms of this study and of reassessing Stone's alignment of children with animals as objects of compassion, was that children in this period were not necessarily included in that category of the humane, civilized self. Instead, children represented the untutored, savage self, and as such, were often depicted as the natural tormentors of animals. The boy who abuses animals in *The Four Stages of Cruelty* goes on to more heinous acts of violence because his cruelty is unabated. He lacks proper instruction, and the "progress" Hogarth depicts is meant to be a warning that cruelty must be caught in its early stages. Higher than animals, yet lower than adults, children required education as a means of controlling their natural cruelty. John Locke's *Some Thoughts on Education* (1693) provides an early example of this belief:

> One thing I have frequently observed in children, that when they have got possession of any poor creature, they are apt to use it ill; they often torment and treat very roughly young birds, butterflies, and such other poor animals which fall into their hands, and that with a seeming kind of pleasure. This, I think, should be watched in them; if they incline to any such cruelty, they should be taught the contrary usage; for the custom of tormenting and killing of beasts will, by degrees, harden their minds even towards men; and they who delight in the suffering and destruction of inferior creatures, will not be apt to be very compassionate or benign to those of their own kind. (Locke 126)

There is no doubt that Locke perceives animals as "inferior creatures" to children, yet he also identifies a natural desire, an instinct towards sadism in children to cause torment "with a seeming kind of pleasure." The human animal, then, in its untutored state, betrays a savagery that must be eradicated in order to safeguard adult human social relationships. Moreover, a resort to violence against children in order to eradicate this savagery was not considered out of place, for as Henry Fielding remarked, "a boy should, in my opinion … be severely punished for exercising cruelty on a dog or cat" (135). This

suggestion that a child should be "severely" chastised (and perhaps beaten) in order for it to learn humane behaviour demonstrates the necessity of questioning Stone's elision of compassion for animals with kindness to children.

The assumption that the child was naturally depraved and savage can be traced to what is termed the "Original Sin" conception of childhood, which is generally considered to have originated with the Puritans. Though the religious basis of the Puritan belief that all humans "were prone to sin and in need of exhortation" (Demers 42) was not necessarily the reasoning behind rationalist doctrine on the nature of childhood, the perception of children as inherently depraved and in need of tutelage demonstrates the persistence of the "original sin" hypothesis even within secular discourse. Its most clear expression can perhaps be seen in stories written for children, such as Mary Wollstonecraft's *Original Stories from Real Life* (1791), which centers on the "icily rational" (Demers 138) Mrs. Mason and her two female charges. In three chapters on "The Treatment of Animals," Wollstonecraft demonstrates how Mrs. Mason observes Mary and Caroline's "cruel sports" (4), before gently instructing them as to how they should respond to the creatures they "despise" (5):

> The domestic animals that I keep, I provide the best food for, and never suffer them to be tormented; and this caution arises from two motives: – I wish to make them happy; and, as I love my fellow-creatures still better than the brute creation, I would not allow those I have any influence over, to grow habitually thoughtless and cruel, till they were unable to relish the greatest pleasure life affords, – that of resembling God, by doing good. (5-6)

Because Mary and Caroline's "education has been neglected" (3), they need Mrs. Mason's lessons in order to advance from a state of taking pleasure in cruelty, to one of being like God, and making "the brute creation" as happy and comfortable as possible. Kindness to animals, according to Mrs. Mason, is what separates human beings from the lower creation, as "man is allowed to enoble his nature, by cultivating his mind and enlarging his heart" (11). Cultivation and education are therefore key to the transformation of children from a state of cruelty to one of compassion.

The Child of Nature

However, the idea that children were naturally sadistic and cruel, and required the light of reason and civilization to make them otherwise, was not universally accepted. In an article published in *The Guardian* in 1713, Alexander Pope wrote that

> We should find it hard to vindicate the destroying of any thing that has life, merely out of wantonness; yet in this principle our children are bred up, and one of the finest pleasures we allow them is the license of inflicting pain upon poor animals; almost as soon as we are sensible what life is ourselves, we make it a sport to take it from other creatures. I cannot but believe a very good use might be made of the fancy which children have for birds and insects. (28)

Pope shows some confusion on the issue of whether or not children naturally torment animals: he argues that "almost as soon as we are sensible what life is ourselves, we make it a sport to take it from other creatures," suggesting that childhood's first actions are violent ones; however, he also contends that children are "bred up" to cruelty. Such an observation therefore begs the question of whether the cruelty he believed children universally demonstrate originated in society, rather than nature.

Confusion about the nature of human cruelty aside, Pope does make one clear assumption – that children have a natural "fancy" for other creatures. Such an assumption can also be seen in what some have termed the "Original Innocence" or "Romantic" conception of childhood. Originating most clearly from the writings of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, this view suggested that "because closest to nature, [the child] had natural purity and sensibility and innate tendencies to virtue" (Brown 4). In *Emile* (1762), Rousseau argued that the child therefore best learns sympathy for animals, not through rigorous moral discipline, but through natural instruction of their shared characteristics:

> To become sensitive and pitying, the child must know that there are beings like him who suffer what he has suffered, who feels pain as he has felt, and that there are others whom he ought to conceive of as being able to feel them too. In fact, how do we let ourselves be moved by pity if not by transporting ourselves outside of ourselves and identifying with the

> suffering animal, by leaving, as it were, our own being to take on its being. (164)

According to Rousseau, the child must embrace its closeness to nature, must come to "know" it, in order to learn empathy for animals and for other human beings. What is interesting about this passage, however, is that the child's affinity to animals, its recognition of shared innocence, is based upon pain and suffering. Both the child and the animal are represented as "feeling subjects," defined, it would seem, by their shared suffering.

The conflation of innocence and suffering seen here in Rousseau's conception of childhood captured the imagination of many of the Romantic poets. In *The Captured World: The Child and Childhood in Nineteenth-Century Women's Writing*, Penny Brown argues that

> as a result of the social and political ferment at the end of the eighteenth century, the spiritual and intellectual conflicts and the atmosphere of national and personal doubt and questioning, the child becomes a potent literary symbol of the subjective exploration of the self, of the writer's sense of uncertainty and vulnerability, and of simplicity, innocence and feeling in the face of the increasingly dehumanized industrial age. (6)

If the child represented innocence endangered by industrial dehumanization, this was a role, I would argue, that it shared with the animal – particularly, with the infant animal. Both were more than mere symbols of a transcendent selfhood: they also represented natural goodness, a state that, while making both the child and the animal naturally playful and joyful, also made them defenseless against the violence inflicted upon them by society. In "To a Young Ass: Its Mother being tethered near it" (1794), Samuel Taylor Coleridge laments, "Poor little foal of an oppressed race! … Do thy prophetic fears anticipate, / Meek child of misery! thy future fate?" (187-88). Though the mother ass shares the speaker's pity, it is the foal whose fate is most painful, as "(most unlike the nature of things young) / … earthward still thy moveless head is hung" (187). Because the foal is a "child," its "dulled spirits" and "ragged coat" are an especial cause of misery, as the speaker can only imagine "how thou wouldst toss thy heels in gamesome play, / And frisk about, as lamb or kitten gay!" (188).

The association of the animal with the child becomes even more evident in William Blake's *Songs of Innocence and Experience* (1794). In "Spring," the child narrator proclaims, "Little Lamb / Here I am, / Come and lick / My white neck. / Let me pull / Your soft wool. / Let me kiss / Your soft face" (230). The lamb and the child share a special kinship in this poem, as both are soft, white, and presumably, innocent. This kinship between the child and the lamb is also evident in Blake's "Holy Thursday": "The hum of multitudes was there but a multitude of lambs / Thousands of little boys & girls raising their innocent hands" (231). There is obvious religious significance in "the lamb," but there is also sharp irony: the lamb, though the figure of soft innocence in these poems, is also a victim – the lamb who will be led to the slaughter, and whose soft wool will be pulled, not by the child, but by the shearer. By so closely associating the child and the lamb, Blake demonstrates the fragility of their shared innocence and the inevitability of its loss.

One can trace an obvious change, then, in the status of the child in relation to the animal in the eighteenth century. Though conceived of within rationalist discourse as the animal's natural and sadistic predator, the Romantic child instead shares with the animal a quality of transcendent, yet fragile innocence. While it would be unfair to categorically state that the Romantics did not concern themselves with the actual child and the actual animal, it is perhaps necessary to point out that children and animals, in much of Romantic poetry, served as symbols of a lost world of innocence, rather than as victims in need of assistance. The influence of these representations, however, is very much evident within Victorian discourse, where the mute suffering of children and animals became the impetus behind legislative action on their behalf.

Animal - Child Companionship and the Victorian Novel

Nineteenth century novels often engaged the imagination while also participating in larger political and moral debates outside the literary realm. As a result, Laura Berry argues, "Victorian representations of childhood are more likely to … position their discourse in relation to social reform projects and debates" than are those of the Romantics (17). Within works such as Dickens's *Nicholas Nickleby* (1838-9) and Anna Sewell's *Black Beauty* (1877), for example, animals and children were depicted not just

as suffering subjects with whom the reader might empathize, but also as potent symbols of the need for social change. Dickens's depiction of the abuse within the Yorkshire schools and Sewell's depiction of the suffering of cab-horses both use the imaginative space of literature to present a moving image of their subjects' misery, an image that encourages readers to see the real-life counterparts of Smike and Black Beauty in their midst. This is not to suggest that children and animals were not idealized during this period, but rather, to argue that images of suffering animals and children were all the more effective as calls for legislation and intervention because the objects of suffering were seen as exemplars of innocence and mute helplessness.

Moreover, one can find instances in Victorian literature in which animals and children are depicted as companions to each other in their shared suffering. That is, the two are not represented solely as symbolically linked, as in much of Romantic literature, but are instead represented in moving depictions of fellowship between animal and child characters. While there are numerous examples in Victorian literature of animals and children providing companionship to one another,[8] the most important, in terms of this study, are the ones in which abused and suffering children form close ties to animals in response to their shared suffering and abuse at the hands of adults. In Dickens's *Barnaby Rudge* (1854), for example, the mad hostler, Hugh, is left "a puny child" who "should have died in a ditch" (104) after his mother is hanged at Tyburn. At the moment of his own execution many years later, he asks if "there is some person who has a fancy for a dog; and not then, unless he means to use him well. There's one, belongs to me, at the house I came from; and it wouldn't be easy to find a better .... You wonder that I think about a dog just now .... If any man deserved it of me half as well, I'd think of *him*" (345). Hugh recognizes that, to most, his care for a dog will seem misplaced, but he is careful to explain his attachment as the result of his ill use at the hands of fellow human beings. Hugh believes that the dog is more worthy of his care, that the animal is a better being than the humans to whom Hugh has been exposed, a belief that can be understood as resulting from Hugh's suffering as a child. In an earlier passage, in which Hugh recalls his mother's hanging, he comments that

> [s]uch a dog as this, and one of the same breed, was the only living thing except me that howled that day .... Out of the two thousand odd – there

> was a large crowd for its being a woman – the dog and I alone had any pity. If he'd have been a man, he'd have been glad to be quit of her, for she had been forced to keep him lean and half-starved; but being a dog, and not having a man's sense, he was sorry. (106)

Hugh's explanation of the dog's pity – that it lacked a "man's sense" – mirrors his own grief at the death of his mother. Though her last wish was that her son "might live and grow, in utter ignorance of his father, so that no arts might teach him to be gentle and forgiving" (335), yet Hugh mourns her death. Both the grieving child and the grieving animal lack the "sense" to judge her harshly, but both have the sensibility to feel grief and pity at her death. Because "sense" is equated with a lack of compassion, Hugh's comment can be seen to support an "original innocence" conception of childhood, in which society is understood as the source of cruelty, and in which children and animals (because closer to nature) display natural feeling.

Consequently, while early animal welfare discourse focused on the animal's ability to feel physical pain – "we should never forget that the animal over which we exercise our power has all the organs which render it susceptible of pleasure and pain" (Erskine 226) – fictional representations that linked the animal and the child also focused on the animal's capacity to feel emotional pain. Animals and children love beyond "sense," and feel to a greater extent than do adults. They do not retaliate against those who abuse them, but instead suffer silently at their hands. In *Armadale* (1866), for example, Wilkie Collins depicts a child and his animal "brothers," who give affection to each other and to the man who mistreats them. When "Ozias Midwinter" speaks of his past, he recalls a childhood of vicious beatings and neglect. After running away from a miserable school experience, he is found by "a sturdy old man with a fiddle … [with] two dancing dogs in scarlet jackets" (90). He is given the name of the senior Ozias Midwinter, and is taught "to dance the Highland fling; to throw somersaults; to walk on stilts; and to sing songs to his fiddle" (91). Though his adopted father beats him and the dogs, which the young Ozias considers his "brothers," they still feel affection for him: "Didn't I tell you just now, sir, that I lived with the dogs? and did you ever hear of a dog who liked his master the worse for beating him?" (91). This attachment to the "master" is defended as a learned behaviour, but it is one learned from the dogs; therefore, the

tendency to love beyond sense, to care for an owner or a father who is cruel, is depicted here as an essentially animalistic quality.

However, the attachment the boy and his "brothers" have for the man who beats them is also, in some ways, entirely pragmatic, as both the young Midwinter and the dogs suffer when the master dies:

> The dogs and I did badly, after our master's death – our luck was against us. I lost one of my little brothers – the best performer of the two; he was stolen, and I never recovered him .... These misfortunes drew Tommy and me – I beg your pardon, sir, I mean the dog – closer together than ever. I think we had some kind of dim foreboding on both sides, that we had not done our misfortunes yet; anyhow, it was not long before we were parted for ever .... Young creatures, even when they are half-starved, cannot resist taking a run sometimes, on a fine morning. Tommy and I could not resist taking a run into a gentleman's plantation; the gentleman preserved his game, and the gentleman's keeper knew his business. I heard a gun go off – you can guess the rest. God preserve me from ever feeling such misery again, as I felt when I lay down by Tommy, and took him, dead and bloody, in my arms! (92)

The world in which this boy and his dog brothers live is shown to be one of hardship and danger. While the man who keeps them also beats them, he at least provides them with protection and a means of living. Their affection for him must therefore be understood not only as a kind of instinctual empathy, but also as a learned response to the harshness of their environment. Animals and children, like Ozias and Hugh and their dogs, feel affection for those who beat them because, it would seem, the world holds much greater pain and dangers than those endured at the hands of the abusive caregiver.

By aligning the child and the animal as shared victims of cruelty, writers such as Dickens and Collins both critiqued English society and defined those most endangered by it. Hugh and his dog and Ozias and his brothers are all victims of an adult human regime that abuses the most innocent and helpless in its midst, making the animal and the child the most likely victims. This is not to say that animals and children were always presented as victims; for while these pairs suffer, other children and other animals in

literature enjoy a petted existence (Dora and Jip in *David Copperfield* come to mind). However, both Dickens and Collins depict animals and children as sharing traits, such as dependency, loyalty even in the face of cruelty, and perhaps most importantly, the ability to feel and to be wounded by these feelings (to feel "such misery"), which make these particular creatures particularly helpless in an adult, human-oriented world. Such a construction of child and animal suffering owes much to the Romantic conception of the child of nature. Ozias Midwinter's description of the need for he and his brother to play, and of his own grief at the death of his companion, shares with Blake and Coleridge the same assumptions about the nature of youth and of its suffering because, like the young ass and the lamb, Ozias and his brothers are defenseless against the violence inflicted upon them by society.

The RSPCA and the NSPCC: Cooperation

Because the child and the animal were represented as exemplars of innocence and suffering in nineteenth-century discourse, it is not, perhaps, surprising that organizations such as the RSPCA and the NSPCC shared such close ties. As I have already recounted, the Liverpool Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children came about at "a local meeting of the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals" at which "a proposal for the formation of a Dog's Home" was converted "into an appeal for the defense of misused children" (Behlmer 53). While such an event might support the assumption with which this chapter began about the apparent preference, in British philanthropy, for animals over children, the connection of animal welfare and children's welfare seemed, perhaps as a result of depictions such as that of Dickens and Collins, a natural fit. Furthermore, with the RSPCA, the fledgling child protection movement found both a ready-made membership and a model with which to combat cruelty to and abuse of children, and with the founding of the London SPCC in 1884, the ties between the two movements became even more evident. Initially, the London SPCC and the RSPCA shared facilities (the RSPCA's board room at Jermyn Street, London), and "a significant overlap existed between RSPCA and London SPCC officials"[9] (Behlmer 67). As well, the London SPCC received significant financial support in its early years from RSPCA members: as Behlmer notes, "32 RSPCA subscribers contributed £178 to the

London SPCC's coffers (20 percent of its total income) between July and December 1884" (64).

The London SPCC also gained from the RSPCA's experience. John Colam, the secretary of the RSPCA, served on the London SPCC / NSPCC Executive Committee until 1894, and "provided useful guidance on planning the structure of the NSPCC" (NSPCC "Links" 1), and his son, Roger Colam, served as the "SPCC's chief legal counsel" (Behlmer 67). With this guidance, the London SPCC adopted the same organizational structure as the RSPCA (a national committee, and various branches throughout the country), the same membership and employment structures (like the RSPCA, the London SPCC would employ secretaries, branch officers, and inspectors) and, significantly, the same methods of propaganda. The London SPCC's journal, *The Child's Guardian*, was modeled on the RSPCA's *Animal World*, and in 1891, the NSPCC's youth auxiliary, the Children's League of Pity, was, again, modeled after the RSPCA's Band of Mercy.

Such close cooperation between two moral reform groups was not necessarily unusual; as Brian Harrison points out, moral reformers in general "shared many personalities, attitudes, and techniques" (290). Many organizations were

> connected indirectly, many directly; and there [were] many links between rival organizations operating in the same policy area. The institutional history of these bodies was riddled with disputes between reformers whose objectives were similar; yet … these schisms did not preclude strong personal linkages between warring institutions. (290)

While the relationship between the RSPCA and the London SPCC was to prove contentious at times, their initial cooperation served the needs of both organizations. The London SPCC, in its early years, gained much from the RSPCA's support, guidance, and assistance, and "the advocacy of a separate organization for child protection would have been politically expedient for the RSPCA. As early as 1870 letters appeared in *Animal World* calling for the inclusion of children in an enlarged 'Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children and Dumb Animals'" (Behlmer 68); however, the RSPCA, "to safeguard its status as a moderate extra-parliamentary reform group, had to resist the demands for uncompromising reform made by extremists. One way to circumvent these

demands, Behlmer notes, was "to encourage enthusiasts to form distinct agencies for narrower ends" (68). By supporting the formation of a society exclusively devoted to the prevention of cruelty to children, the RSPCA was able to maintain its original mandate and purpose.

What I am interested in tracing, however, is not the extent of cooperation or competition between two similar, yet separate organizations. Instead, what I would like to examine is the development of a narrative of child abuse by the London SPCC that allowed it, while enjoying the benefits of that cooperation, to also distance itself from similar concerns for animals. Even though a proposal in 1870 for a "Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children and Dumb Animals" was perceived as logical, if not practical, within only a matter of years, such a proposal was greeted with ridicule. In a December 1893 commentary within *The Child's Guardian*, Benjamin Waugh records that

> We have heard with surprise that the "Harrogate and District Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals" has determined to enlarge the scope of its operations so as to include children. No doubt, in a free country any combination of words may be employed to describe a particular combination of people. It is, therefore, quite open to these particular persons in Harrogate to include the names of "Animal" and "Children" in the same title, but it is not the less a ridiculous and practically impossible combination. ("Notes" CG 7:12, 166)

What had once been a necessary and expedient separation between two similar organizations had become a "ridiculous and practically impossible combination." Such a shift in thinking about the relationship between children and animals as objects of social and legislative concern speaks to, as I will discuss at a later point, the increased professionalization of the NSPCC and its desire to defend what it perceived to be the unique helplessness of children in English society. In order for the child to be "uniquely" helpless, however, it had to be separated from the more negative connotations of its associations with the animal: in particular, from that of the savage and dangerous child.

The Savage Child

The child and the animal were not always represented as meek and defenseless. While both Hugh and Ozias are, in their childhood, depicted as figures deserving of sympathy, both also show a capacity for violence in childhood, a capacity that their lawless actions in later life bear out. The conception of the child as somehow closer to nature is associated with the theory of "Original Innocence," but James R. Kincaid observes that the "child of feeling," "though also associated with Rousseau and the 'cult of sensibility,' unleashes dangers not usually associated with mere 'innocence.' If the child of nature is figured not as an emptiness but one more in touch with primal sympathies, we have a creation more complex and threatening" (74).

To be "primal," to have feeling, that is, suggests a capacity for violence and savagery as much as for love and affection. Hugh's mother believes that "arts" might "teach him to be gentle and forgiving" (Dickens, *Barnaby Rudge* 335), and without the presence of, presumably, proper moral guidance and instruction, Hugh does indeed grow in savagery and violence. Furthermore, Ozias recalls that after Tommy's death, "the keeper attempted to part us – I bit him, like the wild animal I was" (Collins, *Armadale* 92). By claiming that he was "a wild animal," Ozias elides any difference between himself and his animal "brother." Unlike his earlier "dog-like" behaviour of demonstrating affection even in the face of cruelty, however, in this instance, the characteristic he shares with animals is that of violence. The child and the animal, both of whom act and feel without a "man's sense," can act and feel with violence, as well as with love. To be uncivilized, to be close to nature, is to be unspoiled. But such closeness to nature also makes one a "savage" – someone or something existing outside the bounds of adult, civilized society.

The "savage child" was a common figure in Victorian fiction and social discourse, though the association of children with savages was not always pejorative. According to Hugh Cunningham, the "child of nature" often went hand in hand with the concept of the "noble savage," the "ideal state in which man lived in harmony with nature, and [was] imbued with its virtues" (*Children of the Poor* 99). At the end of the eighteenth century, "the qualities associated with noble savagery were projected wholesale onto childhood," and as a result, "These children were often portrayed as

flowers in intimate contact with nature, both physical and animal, and deriving from it 'great physical beauty'" (99).

As Cunningham goes on to describe, however, fears about the unemployment of children, which proliferated when child labour was restricted in the 1830s, led to more unpleasant associations of children with savagery. Commenting on Lord Ashley's[10] response to street children in London, Cunningham argues that Ashley searches

> for a language to describe what he had seen, though unhappily aware that 'language is powerless to describe the truth.' The children of the streets were, he wrote, a 'tribe – bold, and pert, and dirty as London sparrows, but pale, feeble, and sadly inferior to them in plumpness of outline' … These 'independent urchins' or 'young maniacs' had their own way of life, and were increasing in number. They were quite separate from 'the category of poor but peaceful children.' They were 'a wild and lawless race' with 'roving habits', the 'wild colts of the Pampas', the 'Arabs of the metropolis.'" (*Children of the Poor* 106)

While Cunningham focuses, quite rightly, on the racial significance of Ashley's descriptions, I would like to focus on the extent to which these children were figured as wild animals. The term "street Arab," though undoubtedly racist in its implications,[11] originally referred to the breed of horse, rather than to Arab peoples. Other phrases from the nineteenth century, such as "ownerless dogs," and "predatory hordes" (*Children of the Poor* 108) also clearly signify the connection between children and wild animals, and Cunningham concludes that "Animal analogies were indeed common: John Hollingshead wrote of "human child-rats', and Blanchard Jerrold of the 'claws' of the 'wretched children' in the street" (122).

It is tempting to resolve the contradictory aspects of the "child of nature" through a class analysis, arguing that middle-class children represented the "lambs," with their sweetness, innocence, and gentleness (thinking of Dora again), while the street "Arabs" represented the wild, untamed, and potentially violent half of the dichotomy. Such a resolution of the problem would not be far off the mark, because texts that linked children with animals and savages did so as a means of registering their distance from the ideal, middle-class child. In his description of Deputy, "the hideous small boy" (33) who

stones Mr. Durdles in *The Mystery of Edwin Drood* (1870), Dickens relays Jasper's horror at the contrast between what a child should be, and what this boy appears to be, "a little savage" (33): "'Do you know this thing, this child?' asks Jasper, at a loss for a word that will define this thing" (34). The "creature" (as Jasper continually refers to him) is only questionably a child, more definitely a "thing." Moreover, he is only one of a crowd of "young brutes" identified as either "twopenny lodgers or followers or hangers-on of such" who themselves fall upon the boy "as if attracted by some carrion-scent of the Deputy in the air, [and] start into the moonlight, as vultures might gather in the desert, and instantly fall to stoning him and one another" (34). These children are obviously poor children, but they are only barely children, as the description of them as "brutes" and "vultures" testifies. Although the imaginative relationship between children and animals could be employed in order to highlight the helplessness and defenselessness of both, therefore, it also served to register anxiety about the perceived depravity of the children of the poor. Because the "child of nature" could be both helpless and dangerous, both guileless and savage, and both dependent and independent, it could be used to register complex and often contradictory reactions about childhood, and endangered childhood, in nineteenth-century England.

This concept of the child as savage, feeling, and contradictory had to contend with the image of the wholly innocent child. As I described earlier, the nineteenth-century saw the rise to dominance of the conception of childhood as a sanctified, protected space that should be shared by all children, regardless of class. Therefore, when writers were confronted with the animalistic street children of the mid- to late-nineteenth century, their response was often one of horror: "Can these be *children*?" (qtd. in Cunningham, *Children of the Poor* 111). The goal of social reformers, particularly those working with street children, juvenile delinquents, and child prostitutes, then, was to restore these children to a proper childhood that had been denied them, because a child that was allowed to be savage, to be unrestrained and unlawful, was a child that challenged the sanctified space of childhood itself. As Mary Carpenter observed in *Juvenile Delinquents: Their Condition and Treatment* (1853),

> Juvenile Delinquents! The very term is an anomaly, and should startle us as something monstrous and fearful; something which should lead us to

> think, 'How can this be? And if it is so, what can each one of us do to remove so dreadful an evil?' For we are speaking of children, – of young beings but recently come from the hands of their Maker, of whom the Saviour has said … 'Whosoever shall receive one of such in my name receiveth me,' and the care of whom as his 'lambs' he committed with twice repeated injunctions to that apostle whom he appointed to be the rock on which his church should be built. Yet these are called, perhaps are, delinquents; not only *perishing* from lack of knowledge, from lack of parental care, of all that should surround childhood, but they are positively *dangerous*…. (15)

Carpenter suggests that these children are literally dangerous, that their violence and unlawfulness present a physical threat to civilized people. These savage children, who seem "monstrous and fearful," are shocking, however, because they are, or should be, "lambs." Carpenter's use of this term is not the same as Blake's, for she does not rejoice in the "naturalness" of these children, nor does she locate their innocence in their separation from adult society. Instead, her use of "lamb" is religiously inflected – children are the "lambs" of God, and a violent, unrepentant child is a child who requires salvation.

The "Child of God"

The religious implications of Carpenter's rhetoric speak to the importance of the "holy" child to conceptions of childhood in the nineteenth century. This version of the child had a long history before this time, originating in Puritan texts as exemplars of God's grace embodied in infant form. However, at the beginning of the nineteenth century, "the Evangelical movement, a surviving strain of Puritanism, which had already had fifty years of mounting influence behind it associated with the Methodist revival, began to come into its own" (Brown 41). Penny Brown argues that

> the portrayal of the child in Evangelical writing revealed the duality which corresponded to the legacy of, on the one hand, the Puritan and the Wesleyan traditions, and on the other, the Rousseau-istic and Romantic. The child was thus either seen as the product of Original Sin and hence

> burdened by the innate depravity of mankind which had to be recognised, battled with and overcome through individual conversion before salvation could be achieved, or, particularly later in the century, as a version of the 'innocent' child, a symbol of purity and grace. (43)

As I have already discussed, the influence of Evangelicalism and the belief in the child as a product of "original sin" can be seen in depictions of the harsh and isolating childhood experience now often associated with Victorian child-rearing. However, as the belief in childhood as a safe, protected space gained ground, "The latter view became, in fact, a firm favourite with many Victorian writers, gaining ascendancy over the 'Original Sin' approach as the century advanced" (43).

The innocent, holy children of Victorian fiction were characterized by their innate sense of right versus wrong actions and, as Kincaid observes, by their obedience: "A kind of reverence for the child and a concern for its purity contributed to the manic insistence on obedience .... The pure child is thus the absolutely obedient child, the child of God (and a joy to its parents)" (80-81). The precociously virtuous child can be seen throughout Victorian literature, most famously in Dickens's Little Nell in *The Old Curiosity Shop* (1841), but it is also present in Evangelical tracts and literature, in which young girls and boys escape the cruelty and depravity of their environments through religious encounters. The "street-arab evangelist" can be found in the mid- to late-nineteenth century works of writers such as Hesba Stretton and O. F. Walton, whose characters display a "naïve or unconscious religiosity" (88) or, at times, "a conscious and relentless evangelising" (88).

Whereas Brown suggests that such characterizations of children were "symptomatic of the flood of sentimentality in fiction which peaked in the 1880s and 1890s" (88), Cunningham proposes that "The year 1866 may be said to mark the beginning of the sentimentalizing of children of the poor, for the emphasis began to shift from evangelical work towards rescue" (*Children of the Poor* 134). In February of that year, "Shaftesbury entertained to supper one hundred and fifty street boys, 'wild, wandering lads, the wandering vultures of the metropolis'" (134). During the course of that supper, the boys "spoke about their lives" to great effect upon the spectators: "The hearts of the spectators were much moved at the forlorn spectacle before them, and many

friends were so touched at the sad condition of these immortal beings that it was impossible with some to restrain their tears" (Shaftesbury, qtd. in Cunningham 134). Through relating their own sad stories, these boys were transformed for their audience, from "wandering vultures" to "immortal beings." No longer mere animals, these boys were souls in need of salvation, and after placing them in refuge homes and on training ships (134), Shaftesbury proclaimed that

> It had already been proved that if they would take out of the streets of London all the homeless, most friendless, and most destitute lads, polish them gently, and apply the hand of skill and affection, they would turn out to be diamonds – and diamonds, too, as clear and bright as had ever adorned the most splendid crown. (Shaftesbury, qtd. in Cunningham 134-5)

Shaftesbury's discovery of the gem-like nature of these former street "vultures" separates them utterly from the animals to which they had been compared. For while an animal will always be an animal, a child has an immortal soul – and in the case of street children, a soul that requires saving. Therefore, unlike Ozias, Hugh, and their animal counterparts, who command the sympathy of their readers by virtue of their shared capacity to feel pain and suffering, Shaftesbury's street children demand protection by virtue of their souls, because it is the existence of those souls that makes it possible for society to reclaim them, polish them, and, ultimately, "save" them.

The virtuous, godly, endangered child of Victorian sentimental and Evangelical fiction must not, therefore, be confused with the "child of nature." The child of God – recently arrived from the hands of the maker – requires only the proper environment and instruction in order for his or her innate goodness to emerge. Unlike Rousseau's version of the "originally good" child, therefore, this child is not corrupted by society itself, only by the wrong kind of society. The child cannot be blamed for his or her behaviour, nor can that behaviour be understood as a learned response to the child's environment. A child who displays violence, savagery, independence, or ignorance is a child who requires rescue, and after that rescue, he or she requires proper training to ensure that child-like innocence, dependence, and purity can be protected and maintained.

"The Child of the English Savage"

It is this child, the innocent, helpless child of God who, Cunningham argues, is most current in early child-saving rhetoric, because "A sentimentalizing of the child was … built into the dynamics of the situation of those who worked for the rescue of children" (*Children of the Poor* 146). Within early London SPCC and NSPCC writings, allusions to animalistic savagery referred always to the abusive parent, but never to the abusive child. The abusive parent is a "reckless brute" (Waugh and Manning 639), "whom no pretty words, no tender caresses could mollify" (694). The root of his or her savagery is a "sullen, ill-conditioned disposition; and secondly, a cowardice which limits its gratification to unresisting and helpless things" (696). The savage is cruel for the sake of cruelty, and his or her behaviour cannot be connected to poverty, drunkenness, or "social misfortune" (691), but is, instead, rooted in the savage's "nature."

Although the use of "savage" to describe the abusive parent does have (as it did with children) racial implications, the Society's use of the term also associates abusive parents with animals. In the "Notes" section of March, 1887 issue of *The Child's Guardian*, Waugh explains that the society was forced to abduct a child who had "to plead for money to keep the large animal who owned her in drink" (CG 1:3, 22-23), while in another article, he describes the "cat-like killing of a child" (Waugh, "A Righteous Call" 34). In his 1892 article on "Prevention of Cruelty to Children," Waugh describes a parent "fixing big jaws of teeth in the fat of the thigh while child under bed [sic] for refuge, dragging it out, standing up with it, and shaking it 'as a dog shakes a rat'" (151). And in his 1890 article on "Child-Life Insurance," Waugh provides an extensive description of parents who murder their children for money:

> There is in England a herd of cruel reckless married and unmarried creatures with maternal organism, whom, for morbid villainy towards their young, hot-blooded and cold-blooded beasts and reptiles fail to supply figures of speech to describe; and there are males to match them. They are lazy as sloths, lustful as monkeys, crafty as serpents, savage as tigers. (53)

Although Waugh goes on to claim in this particular article that the animal world "fails to supply figures of speech to describe" these abusive, savage parents, it is evident from these (and other) examples that the animal world serves just that purpose in the Society's

rhetoric. The "English savage," by comparison with animals, becomes something less than human, and something worse than mute beasts.

Though the parent might be savage, however, the child of such a parent was never described as such. In "The Child of the English Savage," co-written by Benjamin Waugh and Cardinal Manning, and published in 1886 in the *Contemporary Review*, Waugh and Manning presented to the public what would become the London SPCC's definitive depiction of the abused child. Like Hugh, Ozias, and their animal counterparts, the abused child of Waugh and Manning's article possesses a greater capacity to feel (both affection and pain) than do adults, and a greater helplessness and defenselessness that makes the child particularly deserving of protection. Unlike Dickens's and Collins's children of feeling, however, the abused child here bears no hint of savagery, no capacity to respond with violence to the violence inflicted upon it. Instead, the child is wholly innocent, wholly helpless, and wholly separate from the savagery that surrounds it.

The opening sentence – "The Christianity and the civilization of a people may both be measured by their treatment of childhood" (687) – immediately places this article within a religious framework, and Waugh and Manning continue the religious invocations in their description of ideal domesticity:

> The love of Fatherhood was revealed in the Eternal Father; and the love of Motherhood in the Mother of the Eternal Son. A new and divine consanguinity bound man to God and man to man. It has thereby entered the sanctity of the home and the charities of domestic life. We were already children of God our Maker; we are now children of God by a new birth, and by sonship in Jesus Christ. (687)

The exemplary familial relationship here is the Holy Family, and through it, the family itself is constructed as holy. The home is "sanctified" and the familial relationship is a sign of God's consanguinity to humanity. To fail to live up to this example or to respect and maintain that "sanctity" is to defile the relationship between God and man.

Moreover, it is the child who is most like God, and who best represents this divine-human relationship: "A child is not only made in the image of God, but of all His creatures it is the most like to Himself in its early purity, beauty, brightness, and innocence. It has an immeasurable capacity of joy and bliss, and of eternal union with

God in the beatific vision" (688). The similarities between Waugh and Manning's child of God and the Romantic child of nature are quite explicit here, for in both versions of the child, it is the child's supposed "purity, beauty, brightness, and innocence" that is admired. As well, the child of Waugh and Manning's article shares the deep feeling of the Romantic child, both in its "immeasurable capacity of joy and bliss," and in its capacity for suffering:

> What a mystery is pain in a child. Death reigns over them even in their early innocence. The feeble texture of their frame is quick in every nerve with the sense of suffering. To wound a child, then, is brutal. And if pain in childhood is a mystery, how much more wonderful is the sorrow of a child. The whole soul of childhood is open to the sting of sorrow. To wound a child by maliciousness or by wrong is not brutal only, but fiendish. (688)

Like Ozias, Hugh, and their "brothers," Waugh and Manning's child deserves sympathy and protection by virtue of its peculiar capacity to feel pain – both physically and emotionally.

However, a child's weakness and helplessness is, according to Waugh and Manning, unique, because it is a sign of the child's tenuous connection to this world. This child of God is not wholly connected to nature because, through its connection with the divine, the holy, innocent child is instead almost too good for this world. Paradoxically, while this other-wordliness is a sign of the child's connection to the divine, it is manifested in the child's weakness and fragility:

> Nevertheless, a child is the most helpless and defenceless of the creatures that God has made. The offspring of the lower creatures is no sooner born into the world than it can, for the most part, care for itself. A child does not even know its own dangers. It is thrown for protection, guidance, and nurture upon its parents and upon us. (688)

This child of God, then, is not the robust, independent, deeply feeling child of nature Rousseau describes. This child is marked by weakness, by a mysterious "feebleness" that makes it more prey to pain and death and sorrow than are the infants of the "lower creatures." Although their depiction of the child shows the influence of Romantic

conceptions of childhood, therefore, Waugh and Manning create a distinctive break in the association of children with animals. The child and the animal are no longer equally helpless, nor equally sensitive. An infant animal can "care for itself," whereas a child requires "protection, guidance, and nurture." As well, the animal cannot be said to have the same religious significance as does the child – it does not represent any relationship between God and man, and as a "lower creature," it has no part in the sanctified domestic space. Rather than being depicted as a mute, feeling victim, the animal is instead depicted as hardy – as if formed by God to be able to cope without man's aid or assistance. By implication, then, animals are not as deserving of aid as are children, lacking as they do the child's dependence "on us with an absolute need" (688).

The NSPCC and the RSPCA: Competition

This separation of the child from the animal, by virtue of the child's greater need and greater significance (as a symbol of God's consanguinity to humanity), provided the NSPCC with the means with which to distance itself from its close association with the RSPCA. Though this association had allowed for the sharing of resources and membership between those two societies, by the end of the nineteenth century, such a connection, at least as far as the NSPCC's rhetoric suggests, was no longer desirable. The Society did not attack or slight the RSPCA itself, but its rhetoric increasingly suggested that care and protection for animals was a morally suspect endeavour – one that was not only ethically inferior to the rescue of children, but also, essentially, antagonistic to child-protection work itself. And although such rhetoric can be read as an unfortunate yet unintentional result of the Society's idealized version of childhood, there is much to suggest that the impetus behind it was financial, as well as ideological.

In "The Child of the English Savage," Waugh and Manning describe a family in which the child is starved to death, even though the family "bought meat for their cat" (696), and an article on "The Children's Bread to the Dogs" published in *The Child's Guardian* in 1887 demonstrates a similar failure on the part of a father to provide the same nourishment for his children as for his dogs. The choice of these parents to care for animals before their own children is a sign of their savagery, of their failure to respect

and protect the sanctified space of the home. As the NSPCC would point out ten years later, however, such a preference for animals over children was not restricted to the lowly English savage. Just as the "children's bread" went to animals within abusive homes, so too did moneys the NSPCC felt would be better spent on children go toward the support of societies for animal welfare:

> Referring to Legacies, we are not a little amazed at the fact that we receive so little from the wills of benevolent persons. It is not the dogs but the children to whom fall the crumbs from these tables. It is highly creditable to the lovers of animals that their last charities include handsome shares for the objects of their love. We give once more a form of bequest, which benefactors are earnestly desired to use. ("Notes" CG 11:11, 130).

While Waugh acknowledges that it is "creditable" that those who love animals should give so generously to the cause of their care and protection, the obvious parallel between the stories of abusive homes in which animals are fed and children are not and Waugh's assertion that it is the children who receive "the crumbs from these tables" (while the dogs, one presumes, are well fed) encourages the reader to view the priorities of these "benevolent persons" as morally suspect.

Even in its earliest years, when the London SPCC was benefiting from the support and expertise of the RSPCA, it also, at the same time, used the success of that organization to bolster its own arguments about the devalued place of children in English society. The article "Dogs of London," originally published in the *Contemporary Review*, was reprinted as "Sir Charles Warren on Our Society" in the third issue of *The Child's Guardian*. In this article, Warren[12] argues that the "advance from solicitude for the welfare of animals only to that of human beings, is one of which the nation may well congratulate itself; for the latter will always be found to comprehend the former" (CG 1:2, 20). Although many organizations existed to protect children, Warren's statements make it appear as though "solicitude" for children only came into being with the formation of the London SPCC. Moreover, he suggests that with the emergence of this society, the nation has become enriched, since "Those who are kind to their fellow-creatures will always be found to be also kind and considerate to animals; while, on the contrary, those who are merely fond of animals are known to be often averse to children,

and to care little for the welfare of the human race" (20). The "advance" to which Warren had referred earlier is here attributed to the belief that those who care for children are themselves more "advanced" in their compassion; their consideration extends to all, whereas the love of animals (as represented, presumably, by animal welfare advocates) is described as less encompassing, more narrow in its object. According to Warren, this narrowness of compassion can be attributed to the fact that

> the love of animals in itself is very frequently merely a liking for them so far as they pander to our own selfish amusements; and in many cases the love extends to them as it does to inanimate objects, our goods and chattels, and no farther. So much is this the case that the kindly feeling, goes as far as our own children – that is to say, it is not uncommon to meet with persons who are fond of their own children and their own dogs, but who care little for the children of others. The feeling alluded to, however, as now spreading the country, is beyond all this; it is the love of humanity which is springing up and influencing so many – love for those who are not known; and with this comes also a feeling for animals, of a higher nature than that possessed by those who may love animals only, but who dislike what they call the 'gutter children.' (20)

Warren is not directly attacking the RSPCA or any other animal welfare organization, and in fact, his critique of those who view animals as their own "goods and chattels" is very much in keeping with animal-welfare discourse of the time. His critique of "the love of animals in itself," of "those who may love animals only" is, however, based upon the assumption that animal welfare can somehow displace or pervert the proper feeling of love and compassion for humanity. Moreover, he specifically argues that those who betray this perverted sensibility dislike children, as "those who are merely fond of animals are known to be often averse to children."

The belief that a concern for animal welfare displaced the proper concern for human beings did not originate with the London SPCC, and, in fact, played a role in pro-vivisection writings of the nineteenth century.[13] The specific accusation that Warren levels against "animal lovers" – that this love almost inevitably excludes a proper love for children – does, however, seem to have its root in the emergence of child-protection

discourse. Because the animal and the child had been depicted as sharing a kind of mute innocence that made them particularly defenseless against cruelty, and because literary and philosophical discourse had long used the two to define and describe each other, it was perhaps inevitable that the child and the animal should come to be represented as being in competition with each other for the (apparently limited) compassion of English society. Whatever the case, Warren represents the love for children as being of a "higher nature" than the love for animals, because it is "a love of humanity." The love of animals, as described by Warren, has, instead, much in common with the kinds of instincts displayed by the English savage, because it is concerned with "its own selfish amusements" above anything else. Though the shared membership of the RSPCA and the London SPCC provides strong evidence that those who wished to protect animals were moved by an *equal* desire to protect children, such evidence does not seem to bear mentioning.

Although the London SPCC was content simply to reprint articles of this nature within *The Child's Guardian* in its earliest years, as the Society continued to expand and to require financial backing to support that expansion, it became more open in its critique of those who supported animal welfare organizations. In the "Notes" section of *The Child's Guardian* in 1889, Waugh writes of the financial prosperity of the RSPCA, and claims that

> Without one bit of jealousy of that institution, or any other feeling than one of pain at the thought of its suffering to the extent of a single shilling in the interests of our own society for the benefit of children, it is with restless anxiety that we look to occupying the same position in the esteem of the good and the same dread of the bad; and with adequate resources it must come. ("Notes" CG 3:29, 83-4)

Waugh's words acknowledge the importance of the RSPCA and seem to suggest merely a desire, on his part, for his own society to attain the security and respect enjoyed by the much more established RSPCA. His next words, however, suggest that such graciousness is not entirely heartfelt:

> What can gratify the compassionate more than the fact that during the last month 1,440 destitute dogs have … been captured, and there and then

> removed straight from the kennelless streets of the metropolis to the Home for Homeless Dogs at Battersea. Yet little hatless, homeless children, dying on charity, are left to turn into ashpits and common lodging-houses .... The difference between the nation's treatment of the two homeless things is that one is somebody's *child*, whilst the other is only his *dog*. If wretched children were only dogs, what sunlight would fall into their doomed and dismal lives! (84, original italics)

Waugh's italics and tone here diminish his claim that he can regard the success of the RSPCA "without one bit of jealousy." His scathing critique of a society that will house dogs and yet leave children homeless suggests, perhaps, more outrage than jealousy, but coming as it does on the heels of his own plea for more funding, this critique extends to those who fund the RSPCA instead of the London SPCC. The answer to his question of "what can gratify the compassionate more" than the rescue and care of homeless dogs is provided in his plea for the care of homeless children, and his repetition of the phrase "only dogs" demonstrates his belief that the child is infinitely more worthy than the animal.

What interests me here is not whether a child *is* more worthy or in need of more care and protection than an animal, but instead, why the NSPCC felt such a distinction had to be made. By 1889, it is clear that the NSPCC understood its financial difficulties as resulting, at least in part, from the diversion of funds from children to animals. Announcing a decision to cut back on the formation of new "Aid Committees" (district branches of the NSPCC), *The Child's Guardian* explained that "Getting at cruelty to children is like getting at coal, a costly thing at the outset" ("Notes" CG 4:4, 43). This article goes on to clarify that

> This decision indicates no check in the prosperity of the Society. Its prosperity has been and is still unique. The fact, however, is that the increase in the Society's influence and the demands of its work, especially since the new law, have been greater than its increase in its funds. Were as many of our rich Christians as interested in the prevention of cruelty to children as they are in the prevention of cruelty to animals, the committee would have had no need to check the pace of its crusade against the vilest,

> blackest shame of our land, the famine and pain of tiny staggerers to the grave. (43)

Again, the reader is confronted with the belief that, in terms of social evils, cruelty to children trumps all others as "the vilest, blackest shame." Unfortunately, it is suggested, the support of a lesser cause is in some ways responsible for "checking the pace" of the NSPCC's "crusade." Not only does this passage suggest that there is a finite amount of compassion (represented by donations) to go around, but it takes as a given that more people in England concern themselves with suffering animals than with suffering children.

But this is a given without any evidence. While the NSPCC is careful to provide information about the funds it requires for its work, it at no point provides any figures that back up its assertions that animals received greater financial support in English society than did children. The NSPCC also fails to reveal, in these complaints, that the Society in fact continued to receive more money each year, and that the shortfall it experienced was not the result of a falling-off in funds, but of the inability of those funds to keep up with the aggressive pace of the NSPCC's expansion. But perhaps most importantly, the NSPCC also fails to acknowledge the existence of other child-saving agencies. Certainly, organizations like Dr. Barnardo's Homes and the Church of England Waifs and Strays Society, or any of the multitude of children's organization present in England at the time,[14] might themselves have been responsible for diverting the funds of "rich Christians" away from the NSPCC. And yet, none of these organizations is represented as the competition in NSPCC discourse, nor are charities for temperance, for poor relief, for "fallen women," for overseas missions, or for any of the other innumerable causes of the time. In reading *The Child's Guardian*, one gets the distinct impression that animals and children were the sole objects of charity in nineteenth-century England, with the NSPCC and the RSPCA battling it out on their behalf.

This focus on the competition between the two organizations can be at least partially explained by their initial close cooperation. Because the NSPCC shared membership with the RSPCA (and perhaps even subscription lists), the fledgling organization may have felt that its work was cut out for it in terms of winning over the support of those already committed to the RSPCA. Furthermore, the NSPCC had much

more in common with the RSPCA than it did with organizations such as Dr. Barnardo's Homes, and the need to distance itself from the RSPCA could be seen as an effort by the NSPCC to prove its own uniqueness. Certainly, the fact that organizations for the combined relief of animals and children were proposed before the London SPCC came into existence did seem to be something from which the Society wanted to distance itself. In its criticism of the Harrogate and District Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, for example, which decided in 1893 to expand its scope to include the prevention of cruelty to children, the NSPCC stated that "training for a horse doctor is not so unlike the training of a child doctor as the training of an animals inspector is unlike that of an inspector of children … they have no more relation to one another than have the duties of a head schoolmaster to the duties of a horse trainer" ("Notes" CG 7:12, 166). Given that the NSPCC gained its organizational, membership, and employment structure from the RSPCA, and shared many of the same board members with that organization, Waugh's righteous critique of those who would align animal anti-cruelty work with child-protection rings somewhat hollow.

Nevertheless, it was a critique that could not be made often enough; throughout *The Child's Guardian* in the 1890s, there are articles, notes, and editorials that testify to the fact that animals and children must be represented by separate organizations, and that where there is overlap, it is the children who suffer. For example, in the November 1898 issue of *The Child's Guardian*, Waugh writes that "We have received a newspaper report of 'The Prevention of Cruelty Society' in Queensland. This Society is for animals and children. As is usual in such a combination of work, the work done for animals is greater than that done for the children" ("Notes" CG 12:11, 130). The comment that the supposed slighting of endangered childhood is "usual" in these cases again relates to the idea that those who love animals are somehow ambivalent about or, worse, antagonistic towards the suffering of children. By suggesting that anti-cruelty work on behalf of children and animals was not only impractical, but in fact antithetical, the NSPCC both distinguished itself from the organization with which it shared so many members, and defended its own expertise in the emergent field of child protection.

Separating the Child from the Animal

There may be more to the NSPCC's desire to assert the importance of the child over the animal, however, than mere competition between itself and the RSPCA. Residual conceptions of the child as naturally depraved and sinful meant that many in England still believed that violence was a necessary aspect of parental discipline. In the November 1892 issue of *The Child's Guardian*, Waugh provides what he calls "a fair sample of many communications implying the triviality of our Society's work in comparison with that of the 'Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals'": "Miss H. is not one of those silly sentimentalists who see an 'infant Jesus' in every peevish, squalling child, although, of course, she disapproves of cruelty both to the children and to the still more to be pitied animal, as it is dumb" ("Notes" CG 6:11, 136). Miss H.'s contrast between the "squalling" child and the "dumb" animal would seem to suggest the opposite of what Manning and Waugh had argued in "The Child of the English Savage," for here one gets the impression that the child is more than able to speak up for itself, while the animal requires others to intervene on its behalf. Furthermore, the child's "peevishness" suggests that a good wallop or two will do it no serious harm, whereas the dumb animal, presumably, has caused no such offense. For the NSPCC to venture into the terrain of parental discipline and corporal punishment, the Society had to carefully distinguish between the ill-behaved child (who, it believed, deserved corporal punishment), and the abused child, whose ill-treatment was far in excess of any wrong committed by the child. Therefore, when constructing the abused child, the NSPCC carefully stressed the child's innate meekness, in order to make the child as mute and helpless as the suffering animal.

But if an ill-mannered child was an unattractive object of charity, then the dangerous, savage child of the poor and of the streets was even more so. A letter printed in the July 1893 issue of *The Child's Guardian* from (according to Waugh) a "powerful-minded lady" suggests some of the hopelessness and fear these children aroused in the population:

> Surely it is better that these horrible people should painlessly kill their children before they can feel the horror of a loveless life .... Let us at least turn away in mournful silence while the vile of our own population put

> any merciful limit to their own increase .... Till there are no parents but such as love their offspring, it is far better that they should sleep on their children when they will. ("Notes" CG 7:12, 165)

Though the writer refers to "loveless" homes, the reference to overlaying – a common concern virtually limited to poor families – suggests that the "vile of our own population" refers here to the lower classes. The woman's suggestion that death is the "far better" option to either rescue by the NSPCC or survival and the chance to contribute to the "increase" of this population, gives some sense of the work the NSPCC had to undertake in order to portray the child of abusive homes as worthy of protection.

Attitudes such as this suggest why the image of the "child of God" as opposed to the "child of nature" was so important to the NSPCC. If children and animals had so much in common, it was reasonable to assume that one could choose to help the one that was soft and mute, as opposed to the one that stole one's handkerchief in the street, and that could grow up to produce more savages in the future. The child *as* animal had to be replaced with the child of God, whose care was a divine and ethical injunction. Furthermore, comparisons between children and animals may also have been perceived as threatening by the NSPCC because they fell dangerously into the ungodly territory of social-Darwinian or Malthusian thinking, which, as Waugh and Manning had argued in "The Child of the English Savage," was a grave threat to the sanctity of the family: "The duty society owes to the lives of unwanted children is greatly increased by the waking-up of evil men to the modern ideas that population is a nuisance, and that God and future judgement are 'superstitions'" (693). According to Waugh and Manning, the "new ideas" of the value of human life, separated as they were from concepts of man's consanguinity with God, inspired abusive parents to reject the sanctity of the home, and fall away from their sacred duty of caring for their offspring. In the face of what they perceived as the waning of faith in England, Waugh and Manning argue that "As the tendencies of religious considerations are being superseded, the tendencies of legal ones must take their place, or tampering with infant life will greatly increase" (693). According to this logic, the NSPCC had a responsibility to inspire parliament to take over where religion had lost hold, and to combat the "secularized conscience" disseminated by

"the dictation of certain apostles amongst us" who spread their ungodly creed among "evil disposed men" (693).

In order to make children a worthy object of protection, then, the NSPCC did battle with the "increasing tendency to regard human beings as protoplasm; to shake off the idea of Jesus as the living God, the Father of us all, and to account for human life by molecules," because "Child life and happiness are bound up with the Kingship of God" (Waugh, "Street Children" 3). The concept of the "child of nature," who shared kinship with animals, and who thrived outside the bounds of society, had to be replaced with a concept of the child that fell firmly within the bounds of religiosity, as a means of challenging any view of the child as savage or vicious, and of demonstrating the necessity of providing children with the proper guidance and protection. As well, abusive children had to be presented as inherently separate and distinct from the abusive parents who raised them in order to combat the idea that these children would inevitably become the increase of a "vile" population.

The actual child with whom the Society came into contact, however, did not always show the same desire to be kept separate from the abusive parent. When, during the course of a particularly brutal case in the early years of the Society, it was observed that "the child kissed her mother," Waugh relied upon an association of the child with animals in order to explain this phenomenon:

> when the science of childhood is as well understood as is the science of molluscs, it will no more occur to the legal profession to plead that the mother loves the child, than it now occurs to it that a limpet's clinging to a rock is proof that the rock loves the limpet. By sheer instinct, a little child is bound to love her parents, even those she fears and dreads; and, in spite of dangers, she must show her love. ("Notes" CG 1:2, 14)

Waugh here refers to something that very much resembles the kind of love Ozias and his brothers showed towards the man who beat them. But whereas that love was a sign of both the child's and the animal's true, innocent, and feeling nature, here that same love is reduced to "instinct." The child cannot help it, and as a result, the action is virtually meaningless – or, at least, should not be heeded. It would seem, then, that even Waugh,

who so scornfully dismissed those who would associate children with animals, was not above doing so himself when a child's behaviour could not otherwise be explained.

By and large, however, the NSPCC's rhetoric sought, whenever possible, to impose distance between the two. While the initial cooperation between the two societies had been fruitful largely because children and animals were linked in the public imagination as helpless, feeling subjects, such a cooperation – between the two societies, and it would seem, between children and animals themselves – was no longer desirable once the NSPCC established itself. Whether this connection was severed in order to preserve the NSPCC's image of itself as an organization without precedent, or to allow it to compete with what it perceived to be its most serious financial competitor, or to help the NSPCC convince the public that the child was meek, helpless, and never savage – one thing is certain: although animals and children began the century as natural companions, they ended it as adversaries.

Notes

[1] From *The Morning Observer*, quoted in *The Child's Guardian*, Vol. 2, No. 19 (July 1888): 58.

[2] The Society was granted the prefix "Royal" in 1840.

[3] The Martin Act, preventing cruelty to cattle, was passed in 1822. In 1835, it was extended to all domestic animals.

[4] In "A Useful Savagery: The Invention of Violence in Nineteenth-Century England," however, J. Carter Wood notes that "in 1853, an Act provided the first specific legislative prohibition on violence against women and children" (25). Wood places this prohibition in the context of increased legislation against and penalties for violence of all kinds in nineteenth-century England.

[5] According to Stone, "The origins of this sentiment may be traced back to some obscure zone of English puritan thought, since its first clear expression is to be found in *The Liberties of the Massachusetts Colony*, adopted by the General Court in 1641. This document placed strict limits on the use of judicial torture to extract information, and

forbade husbands to beat their wives or maltreat their servants or apprentices. It even, for the first time in history, legislated to protect domestic animals" (162).

[6]In *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault states that the gradual disappearance of torture "has been attributed too readily and too emphatically to a process of 'humanization,' thus dispensing with the need for further analysis" (7).

[7] In terms of childhood, at least, many historians have hypothesized a point in human history when parents began to value and cherish their children. However, as Linda Pollock points out, "Some general disagreement certainly exists over exactly when a more human attitude to children emerged – McLaughlin (1976), for instance, suggests the end of the 12th century, whereas Lynd (1942) points to the mid-19th, while most authors opt for a date in the 18th century. But there is a consensus that such an event did occur" (12). However, while most historians, Pollock argues,

> have examined the hypothesis that parents, and other adults, have evolved from treating children with cruelty to treating them with kindness ... little systematic analysis has been applied to any source of evidence. Thus the findings of these historians merely generate another hypothesis regarding the treatment of children in the past, that a great deal of individual variation in methods of discipline has always existed and thus no century was or will be notably cruel or kind" (144).

[8] For example, Barnaby and Grip in Dickens's *Barnaby Rudge*; Dorothy and Jip in Dickens's *David Copperfield*; the young boy and "Sparrow" in Morrison's *The Child of the Jago*.

[9] According to the NSPCC, "Of the 119 London SPCC officers listed in its first annual report, 20 belonged also either to the RSPCA or the Victoria Street Society for the Protection of Animals from Vivisection" ("Links" 1).

[10] Born in 1801, Anthony Ashley Cooper, the Seventh Earl of Shaftesbury (a title he inherited in 1851), was famous for his parliamentary career of "paternalistic and evangelical concern" in which he "urged the need for legislation to improve social conditions and to spread wholesome influences among the people" (Finlayson 165). He is perhaps most well-known for his support of the Ten Hours Movement, and his work on behalf of child-labourers.

[11] For an excellent analysis of the racial implications of the term "street Arab," see Lindsay Smith, "The Shoe-black to the Crossing Sweeper: Victorian Street Arabs and Photography." *Textual Practice* 10.1 (1996): 29-55.

[12] Sir Charles Warren was the Chief Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police in England from 1886-88.

[13] See, for example, "The Morality of Vivisection" by Victor Horsley and "The Morality of Vivisection" by M. Armand Ruffer in *Animal Welfare and Anti-Vivisection 1870-1910: Nineteenth-Century Woman's Mission, Volume Three: Pro-Vivisection Writings*. Ed. Susan Hamilton. London: Routledge, 2004.

[14] Behlmer notes that

> A bewildering array of charitable institutions were created to make life less harsh for the young. *The Charities Register and Digest* for 1884 distinguished between those offering the child "relief in affliction," "relief in sickness," "relief in distress (permanent)," – this category alone fills 72 pages – "relief in distress (temporary)," "reformatory relief," and miscellaneous services such as emigration. The most elaborate mechanisms for promoting juvenile welfare was the child-rescue agency. By the mid-1880s three organizations dominated this work, Dr. Stephenson's Children's Home, the Church of England Waifs and Strays Society (the CEWSS), and the Barnardo group. (57-58)

Chapter Two
What Eyes Should See: Child Performance and a "Peep behind the Scenes"

If comparisons between children and animals in the nineteenth century served to define both the child itself and the nature of childhood suffering, narratives of children who performed on the street, the stage, or in the circus, I would argue, centred on the issue of what a child could do with its body, and what could be done to it. Specifically, narratives of child performance focused on the child's body on display – its grace and suppleness, its exertion, its fragility. Moreover, because performance, particularly acrobatics, combined the attributes of play with evident physical exertion and even danger, it elicited complex emotions in its audience, as evidenced by the wide range of responses to it throughout the Victorian period. Child performance was variously understood as a joyful and pleasurable expression of childhood fancy, as an endangerment to the souls of the performers themselves and their audience, as a form of employment, and as a category of child abuse that required legal restriction. The child's body in performance could be seen by all, but the meaning of that performing body and its gestures varied, it would seem, from viewer to viewer. Concerns about what the child's body could and should do were also concerns, therefore, about the audience of that performing body – what it saw, what it felt, and how it responded to the figure before it.

But the problem of the child performer was also that of what could *not* be seen – of that which went on "behind the scenes." While the artful tumbling of a child acrobat appeared to be a joyful expression of a child's "natural" playfulness, it was in fact the result of hard training and the physical "manipulation of the child's body" (Steedman 99). Similarly, the charming "pantomime fairy," while pretty and cared for on stage, was feared to suffer from exhaustion, abuse, and exploitation when off the stage. Concerns about child performers, then, were elicited by the potential for danger and abuse that lay behind the execution of a pleasing performance. Moreover, the awareness of a different reality behind the scenes, a truth behind the performance, also elicited concern about the nature of childhood itself. The child was meant to be transparent – to display openly its emotions and feelings to those who watched. For a child to perform suggested that a child could be artful, manipulative, and deceitful – in other words, distinctly unchildlike. The "behind the scenes" world of the theatre, therefore, elicited concern because of the

effect, both physical and emotional, it could have upon the child. Its limbs moulded to perform feats, and its mind instructed to be artful, the child performer who succeeded in truly persuading its audience presented a threat to visions of childhood innocence and fragility.

In this chapter, I will examine the ways in which narratives of child performance in the nineteenth century coincided with narratives of child endangerment. Because the child performer straddled the world of fancy and the imagination, on the one hand, and the world of commerce and labour, on the other, this figure complicated discourse both about child labour and about the nature of childhood itself. Furthermore, because the performing child represents the child on display, both fictional and actual responses to child performance demonstrate the changing role of adult observation of and intervention on behalf of the child itself. From enjoying the performance to peeping "behind the scenes," the adult audience is necessarily implicated in concerns surrounding the child performer, and if the elision of child performance with child endangerment in certain narratives sought to define what it was a child should do with its body, it also sought to instruct the audience as to how it should react to that child. As a result of these complex and varied reactions to child performance, the child performer was a particularly vexed object of social concern, as will be demonstrated, finally, through an analysis of the NSPCC's own contradictory responses to this figure.

"The Truth of Infancy": Child Performance and Child Labour

In *The Circus and Victorian Society*, Brenda Assael suggests that the origin of nineteenth-century circuses and fairs "had its roots in a variety of cultural sites: the ancient amphitheater, the medieval fair on the ancestral village green, the Lord Mayor's Day procession, the aristocratic court, and the eighteenth-century virtuoso's cabinet of curiosities" (2). But "it was in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries that the organization of these acts into one program performed in a tent or amphitheater was turned into a commercial enterprise" (2). The nature of theatrical employment in circus entertainment varied: some shows were more fixed in nature, being connected to permanent amphitheatres, such as Astley's Amphitheater in Lambeth, while others traveled the countryside; some were run by large companies and headed by managers,

while others were smaller, and run by individual families (3). As well, employment in the circus or fair sometimes led to employment in more urban settings, where "this talent was also displayed in the theater and later the music hall depending upon public demand" (3).

Children were often employed in circus and theatrical performance, and Assael argues that the "cottagelike" nature of some theatrical groups, "in which all the family members were involved in some aspect of the performance" (111) was not uncommon. Children who laboured in theatrical professions, however, "In contrast to their peers in the textile and mining industries, who were affected by the Factory Acts of the 1830s and 1840s … remained untouched by legal controls" (Assael 136). This failure to acknowledge the performing child within legislation restricting child employment suggests that child performance was not understood to be labour in the same ways as was child labour in the factories and mines. In *A Voice from the Factories* (1836), however, Caroline Norton opens her exposé of child labour through an extended depiction of a young acrobat, a "stage-wonder." In this depiction, Norton makes explicit the connections between the suffering of the eminently visible child performer and the suffering of the unseen child working in the factories. This connection between these two separate groups of endangered children suggests that even though child performers did not receive legal protections until late in the nineteenth century, they still aroused concern in some members of their audience.

Norton opens her sequence poem with a dedication to Lord Ashley, in which she recognizes that "it requires but an inferior understanding to *perceive* an existing evil, while the combined efforts of many superior minds are necessary to its remedy," but argues that "I cannot but think it incumbent on all who feel, as I do, that there *is* an evil which it behoves Christian lawgivers to remove, – to endeavour to obtain such a portion of public attention as may be granted to the expression of their conviction" (vii). Norton attempts to garner this "portion of public attention" on behalf of child labourers through her poetry, and the figure with which she opens the poem, a small "stage-wonder," itself commands an audience. In describing the child's performance, Norton focuses particularly on the audience's reaction to the spectacle before them:

Where is the heart so cold that it does not thrill

With a vexatious sympathy, to see
That child prepare to play its part, and still
With simulated airs of gaiety
Rise to the dangerous rope, and bend the supple knee? (III. 5-9)

Norton's rhetorical question, "Where is the heart so cold," speaks to the power of the child performer to elicit feeling from its audience, because, Norton suggests, there is something both natural and right about the child's ability to elicit "sympathy." This particular child elicits a "vexatious sympathy," however, for the part it is about to play is a dangerous one, one for which the child must "prepare." The sympathy the audience feels is therefore distressing, because to feel with the child is also to feel its fear and anxiety.

This sympathy for the child is complicated, however, by the pleasure that the performance itself elicits. The "supple knee" of the child performer suggests that, despite the danger and the need for the child to "prepare to play its part," there is also something natural in this child's play, as if its body is somehow made for this particular work. Furthermore, the performance itself is beautiful, as the child "runs along with scarce perceptible pace – / Like a bright bird upon a waving spray, / Fluttering and sinking still, whene'er the branches play" (IV. 7-9). The comparison of the child to a "bright bird" speaks to the idea of the "natural child" described in the first chapter, who revels in play and in the connection with nature such play confirms. This child possesses an "infant skill" (III. 2) to move fluidly, gracefully, and lightly, and part of the pleasure of the performance is that of witnessing the child's body in action.

Norton is careful to point out, however, that the child has been "(taught to earn its bread / By the exertion of an infant skill), / Forsake the wholesome slumbers of its bed, / And mime, obedient to the public will" (III. 1-4). This child's skill might be natural, but it is also the result of "exertion," exertion that is necessary for the child to "earn its bread," and that deprives the child of "wholesome slumbers." This performance, as Norton therefore clearly argues, is not play at all, but labour. The child, however, must "mime" and put on "simulated airs of gaiety" (III.8) in the commission of its performance. It "lifts its small round arms and feeble hands / With the taught movements of an artist's grace" (IV. 3-4), and on its face "a joyless and distorted smile / Its innocent

lips assume; (the dancer's leer!)" (V. 1-2). The "smile," the "grace," and the "gaiety" of the child are all here, but they are "simulated," "taught," and "assumed." Clearly, while the actions of this child might appear playful and natural, they are in fact the actions of a child "playing" its part: performing childlike "gaiety," while attempting to conceal exhaustion, fear, and necessity.

This performance is not entirely successful, however, for while the "dancer's leer" bespeaks the moment when the child succeeds in "conquering its terror for a little while" (V. 3),

> Then lets the TRUTH OF INFANCY appear,
> And with a stare of numbed and childish fear
> Looks sadly towards the audience come to gaze
> On the unwonted skill which costs so dear,
> While still the applauding crowd, with pleased amaze,
> Ring through its dizzy ears unwelcome shouts of praise. (V. 4-9)

Though the child might momentarily "conquer" its emotions, its experience is one of "terror," of a "numbed and childish fear" that is betrayed to the audience by its eyes, its "stare." The "truth of infancy," it would therefore appear, is that of the child's transparency – of its failure to obscure completely its own terror behind a "joyless and distorted smile" (V. 1).

Although the child fails, both to perform a natural and convincing smile, and even to maintain the façade of a smile, the audience, nevertheless, is captivated by the performance. That is, while the speaker sees through the performance to the "truth of infancy" which is betrayed by the child's sad and frightened gaze, the "applauding crowd," who in turn "gaze" upon the child, respond merely with "pleased amaze" and "unwelcome shouts of praise." The audience members here represent an authority figure, because, in response to the child who has performed "obedient to the public will" (III. 4), they show that they are pleased, and "reward" the child for its efforts. But Norton suggests that too much has been asked of this child; its skills "unwonted," its praise "unwelcome," the stage-wonder is more a victim of its natural talents, and of the audience members' demands for those talents to be put to use for their pleasure, than a child who has won praise for proper exertion and obedience.

If the child's audience feels pleasure in the performance, Norton instructs her reading audience in the proper response to this spectacle when she asks, "What is it makes us relieved to see / That hapless little dancer reach the ground; / With its whole spirit's elasticity / Thrown into one glad, safe, triumphant bound?" (VI. 1-4). The use of "us" here includes both the speaker who has observed the child's terror, and the reading audience whom Norton rhetorically includes in the feeling of relief at the closure of the child's performance. The "truth of infancy" is here made evident not by the child's obvious terror, but instead, by the contrast between the child's strained performance of "simulated airs" (III. 8) and "taught movements" (IV. 4), and its own "glad, safe, triumphant bound" (VI. 4) at the completion of the performance. The appearance of the "real" child, in sharp contrast to the child performer, awakens within the speaker (and by association, Norton's audience) a feeling quite different from "pleased amaze":

> Why are we sad, when, as it gazes round
> At that wide sea of paint, and gauze, and plumes,
> (Once more awake to sense, and sight, and sound,)
> The nature of its age it re-assumes,
> And one spontaneous smile at length its face illumes? (VI. 5-9)

Although the audience had responded with pleasure to the child's "joyless and distorted smile," its "dancer's leer" (V. 1-2), the speaker feels only sadness at the appearance of the child's own "spontaneous smile." In "re-assuming" the "nature of its age," the child performer reveals the extent to which the audience's pleasure in the performance was elicited by "simulated airs" (III. 8), rather than by the child itself. In other words, the performance of childish "grace" and "gaiety" brings pleasure to those who fail to recognize the reality of the child's labour, whereas the recognition of the child's own relief and joy at the end of the performance brings only pain to those who apprehend the child's true nature.

This pain springs from the awareness, Norton suggests, of the hardship that the child has endured, a hardship that is, in fact, "unnatural":

> Because we feel, for Childhood's years and strength,
> Unnatural and hard the task hath been; –
> Because our sickened souls revolt at length,

And ask what infant-innocence may mean,
Thus toiling through the artificial scene … (VII. 1-5)

The appearance of the "real" child in its "triumphant bound" (VI. 4) and its "spontaneous smile" (VI. 9) reveals the artifice of the performance and the reality of the child's "unnatural and hard … task." Though the audience's "sickened souls revolt at length" only in the end, Norton suggests, the "truth of infancy" should be apparent to all: that a child, in its "infant-innocence" should not be "thus toiling through the artificial scene." This "truth" is therefore twofold: it is "unnatural" and "hard" for a child to labour, to "toil," but it is also unnatural for a child to be "artificial," or, to be more specific, to be exposed to and forced to occupy a space that is artificial. The influence of Romantic conceptions of the child is very evident here, because the "truth" that is revealed is that the child should be natural (transparent), that the child should enjoy the "natural world," and finally, that the child should not undertake tasks in excess of its "years and strength."

Norton's use of a child performer to argue that "Ever a toiling child doth make us sad" (IX. 1) provides a complex segue into her examination of child labour in the factories. Because the child performer is visible before all, and, even in spite of its training, is unable to obscure the truth of its "infant-innocence" (VII. 4), it serves to represent the "pent-up wretches" (X. 2) of the factory hidden from the public eye. But Norton's use of a child performer as a means of eliciting public concern on behalf of child labourers to make this argument can also be seen as, in part, a defense for her own choice of genre. That is, the child performer, by engaging the imagination through the practice of its art, has the ability to move its audience, to elicit feelings and to provoke insights into the true nature of childhood. So too, in a sense, does Norton defend her own work, for as she comments in the dedication to her poem, "doubtless there are those to whose tastes and understandings, dry and forcible arguments are more welcome than reasonings dressed in the garb of poetry" (vi). Like the child performer, the truth of Norton's argument – the "reasoning" – is painted and spangled for the audience, for it is "dressed in the garb of poetry." Norton is careful to point out, however, that, like the child performer whose "truth of infancy" shines through, she has not obscured the truth, because she has "in *no* instance overcharged or exaggerated by poetical fictions, the picture drawn by the Commissioners appointed to inquire into this subject" (viii). The

tableaux of suffering that she presents throughout the poem are "fictions," but Norton defends them on the grounds that "as poetry is the language of feeling, it should be the language of the multitude" (vi). Fancy and imagination can obscure or exaggerate the truth, but they can also, she suggests, bring about a revolution in feeling in their audience.

If the parallel between the child performer, who elicits pity on behalf of the children labouring in the factories, and Norton's poetry, which serves to elicit that same pity through the use of imaginative representation, holds true, then the stage-wonder in Norton's text is a complicated figure. While Norton encourages the reader to empathize with and feel pity for this child's fear, she also, through her own use of this figure to move her audience, testifies to the stage-wonder's power. Though the child performer's skills are "unwonted," it has, nevertheless, the ability to command an audience, and to make that audience feel, whether it be pleasure, guilt, or sadness. I will argue that this power of the child performer to move the adult audience, and perhaps to embody imagination and fancy, would be at the heart of conflicting responses to child performance throughout the nineteenth century.

Fantasy and Reality: The Child Performer in Sentimental Fiction

Although Norton is careful to point out that her "stage-wonder" is engaged in labour, not play, for writers of sentimental fiction, such as Dickens and Collins, the image of the theatre as a place of fantasy and imagination was tremendously attractive. For Dickens in particular, the "world of the stage and circus was the 'type' of fairyland; its inhabitants, ridiculous, feckless or pretentious as he might represent them, were by these very qualities detached from the harsh world of materialism" (Cutt 163). In Dickens's novels, therefore, the world of the theatre is not a place of danger, but a place of refuge from the dangers of the outside world. Furthermore, as Brenda Assael suggests, "in Wilkie Collins's *Hide and Seek* and Charles Dickens's *Hard Times* the circus girls Madonna and Sissy Jupe, respectively, embody 'fancy,' 'imagination,' 'romance,' and 'creativity'" (141). In a sense, then, the theatre in these texts comes to symbolize – as a place of play, freedom, and fancy – childhood itself. There is also much to suggest within these texts, however, that while both authors valorized and celebrated the world of the circus as a

place of escapism for adults, neither entirely supported this world as the proper place for a child.

In Dickens's *Nicholas Nickleby* (1838-9) and *Hard Times* (1854), and in Collins's *Hide and Seek* (1854), the theatre provides protection for those rejected or endangered by the outside world, and in particular, by the failings of their own families. Nicholas Nickleby and Smike find employment within Mr. Crummle's theatre company, Thomas Gradgrind hides from the law in Sleary's circus, and in Collins's novel, the Peckovers, a circus clown and his wife, rescue the infant Madonna and her dying mother from the horrors of the workhouse. For all of these characters, the circus and the theatre represent a place of safety, but perhaps more importantly, these characters also find acceptance in a kind of surrogate family within the theatrical world. Smike, abused and orphaned, and Nicholas, temporarily exiled from his mother and sister, are warmly welcomed into Crummle's troupe and are there given the acceptance and support that they have failed to gain from their own families. Tom, though exceedingly surly and ungrateful for the sanctuary that he has been given in Sleary's circus, is nevertheless taken in and protected on behalf of Sissy Jupe, who considers the circus folk as a kind of extended family. And at the moment of her death, Madonna's mother gives her child to Mrs. Peckover, by whom she is raised as part of the circus family, who (for the most part) respond to her with generosity and kindness. As Mrs. Peckover relates, "She grew up so pretty that gentlefolks was always noticing her, and asking about her; and nearly in every place the circus went to they made her presents, which helped nicely in her keep and clothing. And our own people, too, petted her and were fond of her" (Collins, *Hide and Seek* 90). By contrast, Madonna's own family dismisses her as "a child of sin" (88), and suggests only that "the parish must support it if nobody else would" (88). The theatre, then, rather than being purely a place of employment, is represented within these works as a kind of home – as a place of safety, acceptance, and love.

In *Hard Times*, however, the theatre symbolizes not just the home, but also childhood itself. Louisa and Thomas Gradgrind have the misfortune to be raised by their own parents in their own home, and as a result, suffer greatly under their father's system of education, one that eschews imagination and fancy in favour of a hyper-Benthamite obsession with facts. Having carefully raised his children according to his "system,"

Gradgrind is therefore horrified to witness his children's exposure to the harmful effects of "Sleary's Horse-riding" circus:

> the turning of the road took him by the back of the booth, and at the back of the booth a number of children were congregated in a number of stealthy attitudes, striving to peep in at the hidden glories of the place … Phenomenon almost incredible though distinctly seen, what did he then behold but his own metallurgical Louisa, peeping with all her might through a hole in a deal board, and his own mathematical Thomas abasing himself on the ground to catch but a hoof of the graceful equestrian Tyrolean flower-act! (50-51)

As a result of their father's educational system, the Gradgrind children are deprived of a proper childhood, and the circus for them represents a glimpse into a world that is utterly foreign to their own. For them, the "hidden glories" of the circus promise a glimpse of something that can reveal the limitations of their own existence: that is, it provides access to fancy and the imagination, to which, as children, they have a right, but of which they have been deprived. "Peeping with all their might," Louisa and Thomas wish to gaze upon that which represents their own lost childhood, and which will promise them a momentary escape from the constraints of their father's household.

Rather than focusing upon the dangers of the circus, then, Dickens instead focuses on the danger children face within a strict, loveless home. Louisa, in particular, is aware that she has been damaged in some way by her rigid upbringing, an awareness brought home by her family's adoption of Sissy Jupe. Sissy, a circus girl, is brought into the Gradgrind home to serve as an "example" to Louisa: an example "of what this pursuit [of the circus world] which has been the subject of a vulgar curiosity, leads to and ends in" (Dickens, *Hard Times* 72). Ironically, Sissy instead demonstrates to the Gradgrind family the benefits of imagination and play to the formation of feeling, nurturing womanhood. While Louisa comes to understand that she has been irreparably harmed – "I don't know what other girls know. I can't play to you, or sing to you. I can't talk to you so as to lighten your mind, for I never see any amusing sights or read any amusing books that it would be a pleasure or a relief to you to talk about" (88) – Sissy goes on to fulfill the normative female role of wife and mother: "happy Sissy's happy children

loving her; all children loving her; she, grown in childish lore; thinking no innocent and pretty fancy ever to be despised; trying hard to know her humbler fellow-creatures, and to beautify their lives of machinery and reality with those imaginative graces and delights" (315). Sissy, the former circus girl, becomes a model of middle-class femininity, a role she shares with Madonna, the former circus girl of Wilkie Collins's *Hide and Seek*. "[D]eliciously soft ,bright, fresh, pure, and delicate," dressed in "very pretty, simple, Quaker-like attire" (48), and with a face "the nearest living approach they had ever seen to that immortal 'Madonna' face, which has for ever associated the idea of beauty with the name of RAPHAEL" (50), Madonna represents the quintessential angel in the house. Compared to Louisa Gradgrind, who marries a man she does not love, who teeters on the edge of an infidelity, and who remains essentially tainted and childless at the end of the novel, Sissy and Madonna, the former circus girls, fare very well indeed.

They are, however, "former" circus girls, and there is much to indicate in these texts that, despite even Dickens's attachment to the theatre as a place of fancy, he sees it as no place to raise a child, particularly a girl. That is, while both Dickens and Collins use the circus as a means of representing the joys of fancy and the imagination, as well as the danger children face in the materialistic, hypocritical, middle-class world, both writers also register concern about the actual role of children within the theatre. In *Nicholas Nickleby*, Dickens's description of Mr. Crummle's daughter – the "infant phenomenon" – gestures towards some of the dangers a child may face in the theatrical profession. The phenomenon is presented to Nicholas as a ten-year-old wonder; however, Nicholas's surprise at this information is elicited not by the precocity of her talent, but by her haggard appearance:

> the infant phenomenon, though of short stature, had a comparatively aged countenance, and had moreover been precisely the same age – not perhaps to the full extent of the memory of the oldest inhabitant, but certainly for a good five years. But she had been kept up late every night, and put upon an unlimited allowance of gin-and-water from infancy, to prevent her growing tall, and perhaps this system of training had produced in the infant phenomenon these additional phenomena. (262)

Dickens plays this moment for its dark humour, but there is, nonetheless, serious concern expressed here. Though the infant phenomenon is neither an infant nor a phenomenon, she has also not enjoyed an ideal childhood, and if Louisa and Thomas Gradgrind are ruined by their father's "system," there is much to suggest that Mr. Crummle's child has suffered, at least physically, from his own "system of training." Like the stage-wonder in Norton's poem, the infant phenomenon must forsake sleep in order to earn her living. Though the circus in Dickens's novels may provide an ideal surrogate home and surrogate family, therefore, the infant phenomenon suggests that Dickens felt uneasy about the child for whom the circus was home, family, *and* place of work.

Furthermore, although it is true, as Assael says, that both Sissy and Madonna embody imagination and romance, it is nevertheless important that both girls are removed from the circus in which they are found and placed within the middle-class home. Sissy's father abandons his child so that she will find a better life outside the circus, and though there is irony in the fact that it is Sissy herself who "saves" the Gradgrind family, she is, nevertheless, rescued from her lower-class life into one of middle-class domesticity. Moreover, Valentine Blyth's adoption of the young Madonna in *Hide and Seek*, which prevents her from performing in Mr. Jubber's circus, is depicted as nothing less than her rescue and salvation, because in that circus the young deaf-mute had faced both physical abuse and moral degradation. In fact, Madonna's deafness and muteness are both the result of her participation in the circus. Yielding to pressures from the circus' proprietor, and from Madonna's desire to "play," Mrs. Peckover consents to allowing Madonna to take part in a performance: "I don't know what we should have done then, if my husband had lost his engagement. And, besides, there was the poor dear child herself, who was mad to be carried up in air on horseback, always begging and praying to be made a little rider of" (91). Again, as in Norton's text, there is a sense here that there is something natural about child performance, that the child herself can both enjoy and excel in the work to be done. There is, however, also something *unnatural* in the child's desire to perform; as her adoptive-mother observes, Madonna "had a sort of mad fondness for it that I never liked to see, for it wasn't natural to her" (91). The "dear" child, who is pretty and fond and petted, becomes, through the influence of the circus, infected with a desire to perform dangerous stunts. The catastrophe that ensues (Madonna is dropped by the

rider who carries her and is seriously injured) results in the child's complete deafness and muteness. She can no longer "beg and pray" to perform, but is still forced to play a part, parading her deafness in a "weary pilgrimage" (61) that brings her no joy. Her madness for performance past, Madonna must continue to perform long after she herself can find pleasure in it.

The success of Madonna's "act," however, lies in her failure to perform. Made to walk around the ring with her slate and chalk performing conjuring tricks, she elicits applause and sympathy by virtue of her condition and demeanour:

> The face and manner of the child, as she walked into the centre of the circus, and made her innocent curtsey and kissed her hand, went to the hearts of the whole audience in an instant … she began to perform her conjuring tricks with Mr Jubber and one of the ring-keepers on either side of her, officiating as assistants. These tricks, in themselves, were of the simplest and commonest kind; and derived all their attraction from the child's innocently earnest manner of exhibiting them, and from the novelty to the audience of communicating with her only by writing on a slate. (59-60)

The attraction of Madonna's performance, therefore, is that it is not a performance – her innocence, her earnestness, and her unique impairments are what move her audience, rather than any particular skill. It is the artlessness of her performance, the appeal of her true child's nature, that brings pleasure to those who watch her.

If Collins is clear about what appeals to the audience in this performance, he is equally clear as to the nature of the audience itself. His assurance that the protagonist Valentine's attendance at this performance "did not proceed from that dastard insensibility to all decent respect for human suffering which could feast itself on the spectacle of calamity paraded for hire, in the person of a deaf and dumb child of ten years old" (57-58) instructs the reader that Valentine's own reaction will be the proper response to such a spectacle:

> He saw the small fingers trembling as they held the cards; he saw the delicate little shoulders and the poor frail neck and chest bedizened with tawdry mock jewelry and spangles; he saw the innocent face, whose pure

> beauty no soil of stage paint could disfigure, with the smile still on the parted lips, but with a patient forlornness in the sad blue eyes.... (62)

Although Valentine sees and is enraptured by the child's beauty and innocence,[1] he also, like the speaker in Norton's poem, sees beyond the pleasure elicited by the child to the suffering she herself endures. "Trembling," "frail," "sad," and "forlorn," Madonna cannot disguise the weariness she feels, even behind "tawdry mock jewelry" and "stage paint." She is transparent, and the true nature of her performance is visible to all who have the wisdom, and the proper insight, to see it.

Valentine undoubtedly has that insight, and inspired by what he sees, he endeavours to learn more about the child. After seeing "terror in her eyes – terror palpable enough to be remarked by some of the careless people near Mr. Blyth" (67), he follows her backstage in order "to find out what was really going on behind the red curtain" (67), where he discovers that she has been beaten for making a mistake in her performance. Unlike the actions of the "careless people" who remark on the child's terror but do nothing, Collins suggests, the proper response to the child's evident fear is to look behind the scenes, to intervene. And intervene Valentine does, as he arranges to meet with Mrs. Peckover to propose his own adoption of the child. While Mrs. Peckover is understandably upset at the thought of giving up her child, Valentine and his friend, Mr. Joyce, offer arguments against which she cannot defend herself. The circus world in which she lives, they argue, is one of great danger to Madonna, both because of the cruelty and abuse she faces at the hands of the proprietor, and because of even greater dangers to her innocence and purity. Mr. Joyce urges Mrs. Peckover to

> "Only reflect on Mary's position, if she remains in the circus as she grows up! Would all your watchful kindness be sufficient to shield her against dangers to which I hardly dare allude? – against wickedness which would take advantage of her defencelessness, her innocence, and even her misfortune? Consider all that Mr. Blyth's proposal promises for her future life; for the sacred preservation of her purity of heart and mind." (104)

Although Madonna does grow up to be a pure and virtuous woman, she does so because she has been rescued from the polluting influence of the theatre. The "tawdry jewelry" and "soil of stage paint" that she wears during her performances not only provide a sharp

contrast to her own "pure beauty" (62), but also suggest a kind of prostitution, in which her innocence and purity are at risk. Her body on display before the audience arouses Valentine's indignation, then, as much from the parallel this display draws between her and other women who display their bodies, as from the exploitation of her affliction. Though Madonna is loved and cared for by the surrogate family that takes her in, they cannot provide her with the proper childhood she deserves, nor give her the proper "position" when she will become a young woman.

The fact that both Sissy and, especially, Madonna, are saved from the world of the circus and introduced to the world of middle-class domesticity, points to the extent to which discourse on children in the theatre centred on issues of class. Though the theatrical world could represent fancy, imagination, and freedom, all things increasingly associated with the ideal childhood, in reality those children who grew up within the theatre belonged to the working classes. And though these children, particularly in the first half of the century, often worked alongside their family in the performance industry, the reality of their labour, combined with concerns about the environment in which they lived and worked, raised increasing fears on their behalf. Moreover, where those concerns coincided, as in the case of street-performers, with narratives about the dangers of the city and the immorality of the working classes, the child performer was seen as particularly endangered.

Tumblers, Traders, and Prostitutes: Child Street Performance

Children who performed in the streets did so under a variety of arrangements: attached to adult street performers and entertainers (as seen in Mayhew's Highland dancer, and in the Italian *padroni* system[2]), working as part of a troupe, or working on their own account, at tumbling or singing as a glorified form of begging. Because the kind of work children found in the streets was dependent on a variety of factors (such as the weather, the time of day, and the season, as well as the living situation of the children themselves – whether they were runaways, orphans, or living with their families), street children who performed often did so on a much more casual basis than did children who were attached to a theatrical company or circus. The casual nature of the work made street children difficult to account for, and even more difficult to categorize. Nineteenth-century

narratives of children who perform in the streets therefore tend to enunciate fears about street children in general: about their lack of childishness, their independence, and their perceived immorality. Furthermore, such fears are often gendered; as Henry Mayhew's *London Labour and the London Poor* (1851-52) demonstrates, whereas the artfulness and cunning of boys who worked in the streets could arouse admiration as well as trepidation, the proximity to immorality of the girl who worked in the streets aroused only anxiety.

In *London Labour and the London Poor*, Henry Mayhew set out to explore, interview, and categorize the types of labour and of labourers in London's streets. Within this voluminous work, Mayhew often comments upon the lives and manners of children who, whether on their own or attached to family, are essentially raised by the streets:

> The education of these children is such only as the streets can afford; and the streets teach them, for the most part – and in greater or lesser degrees, – acuteness – a precocious acuteness – in all that concerns their immediate wants, business, or gratifications; a patient endurance of cold and hunger; a desire to obtain money without working for it; a craving for the excitement of gambling; an inordinate love of amusement; and an irrepressible repugnance to any settled in-door industry. (24)

The education these children receive on the streets is one that makes them unfit for what was increasingly conceived of as a proper childhood. These children endure privation, rather than enjoy security and comfort; they have a "precocious" independence when it comes to fulfilling their own "gratifications," rather than depend upon those who could, presumably, choose more wisely on their behalf; and though, like all children, they enjoy amusement, in their case this enjoyment is "inordinate." These are children without boundaries or restrictions, children who cannot settle "in-doors" in the proper sphere of the home.

Mayhew's focus on their "desire to gain money without working for it" and their "repugnance" to settled "industry" suggests the recognition on his part that these children must work, which, in turn, indicates an acceptance of the distance between these poor children of the streets and their wealthier counterparts. In this sense, Mayhew's attitude towards the children of the costermongers is influenced by residual narratives about the necessity of preventing idleness among the children of the lower and working classes. In

his interviews with children themselves, however, Mayhew often registers anxiety about the nature of the child he sees before him, an anxiety that speaks to emergent ideas of childhood as a carefree time that should be shared by children of all classes. In his interview with the Watercress girl, in particular, Mayhew expresses anger and disbelief at the child who "although only eight years of age, had entirely lost all childish ways" (64): "There was something cruelly pathetic in hearing this infant, so young that her features had scarcely formed themselves, talking of the bitterest struggles of life, with the calm earnestness of one who had endured them all" (64). The fact that this "infant" is, "in thoughts and manner, a woman" (64) is brought home to Mayhew by his querying her on what he considers appropriately "childish subjects." Asking her about toys, parks, and playing, Mayhew is met with "a look of amazement," and he comes to the conclusion that "All her knowledge seemed to begin and end with watercresses, and what they fetched" (65). Throughout his interview with this girl, Mayhew seeks to register, through his questions and her responses, the extent to which this child is not a child, to which she has aged before her time, as evidenced in her body and in her face, which "was wrinkled where dimples ought to have been" (65).

Mayhew's response to the watercress girl demonstrates his desire for a child to be a proper child; that is, to be given "Parental instruction; the comforts of a home, however humble … the influence of proper example; the power of education; [and] the effect of useful amusement" (185). His expectations of her, however, are also gendered; that is, he is able, with the boy street children, to recognize aspects of their lives in the streets that unite them with boys of all classes – for he asks the reader to consider the street boys in the light of "the spirit of emulation, of imitation, of bravado, of opposition, [and] of just and idle resentment among boys" (161), the "among" suggesting that these are shared characteristics of all male children, regardless of class. But he sharply contrasts girl children, such as the watercress girl, with middle-class ideals of femininity and womanhood. Mayhew argues that because girl children belong "to the sex who, in all relations in life, and in all grades of society, are really the guardians of a people's virtue," his inquiry into the lives of "the female children of the street" is "much more important" (161) than that of the boys.

In his analysis of the children of the street, therefore, Mayhew applies general rules about the proper nature of childhood that seek to register sameness between the street children he sees, and the ideal, middle-class counterparts with which he implicitly compares them. Because the boys of the street register sameness, their lives and the habits cause him less anxiety than those of the girls, who do not measure up to the general rule he applies to them: that girls and women in "all" classes of society represent virtue. This particular anxiety about the occupations, habits, and demeanour of girl street children in comparison to those of boys, I would argue, can be seen particularly in those of Mayhew's subjects who have nothing to sell – in those who must use their bodies as a means of earning a living.

In his discussion of the "crossing sweepers" of London, Mayhew describes this occupation as "one of those … which are resorted to as an excuse for begging" (257). The boys engaged in this work combine their sweeping with "tumbling": "When I see anybody coming, I says, 'Please, sir, give me a halfpenny,' and touches my hair, and then I throws a caten-wheel, and has a look at 'em, and if I sees they are laughing, then I goes on and throws more of 'em" (279). This boy, the "King" of the crossing sweepers, has his routine, his performance completely worked out, and the measure of his performance's success is the pleasure he brings to his audience. The boy's language would seem to suggest that he is one of those children Mayhew complains of who "desire to obtain money without working for it," as his description of "throwing" a "caten-wheel" suggests ease, rather than labour. And in his interview with "Gander," the "Captain" of the Crossing-Sweepers, Mayhew himself observes what appears to be the ease and naturalness of the boy's tumbling:

> During his statement, he illustrated his account of the tumbling backwards – the 'caten-wheeling' – with different specimens of the art, throwing himself about the floor with an ease and almost a grace, and taking up so small a space of the ground for the performance, that his limbs seemed to bend as though his bones were flexible like cane. (273)

Mayhew here, like the audience of Norton's stage-wonder, is mesmerized by the child's body in action, by its flexibility and "grace." And though his comparison of the child's bones to cane suggest a kind of disquiet on Mayhew's part, it is one that springs from a

recognition of the strangeness of a child's body, rather than from any sense that this movement is unnatural. Because the boy can "throw" himself about with "ease," his tumbling appears effortless.

Tumbling is, however, an "art," and Mayhew, and the boys themselves, are careful to point out the work that has gone into obtaining this skill, and the effort it takes to perform it correctly. The "King" of the crossing-sweepers points out that "The Gander taught me tumbling" (279), and he complains that, while he can do a caten-wheel "twelve or fourteen times running … It just *does* tire you, that's all" (279 original italics). The "King," as Mayhew describes, has "wondrous tumbling powers": "He could bend his little legs round till they curved like the long German sausages we see in the ham-and-beef shops; and when he turned head over heels, he curled up his tiny body as closely as a wood-louse, and then rolled along, wabbling like an egg" (278). The boy's body can do these "wondrous" things, but it is because of training, not only by Gander, but by a gentleman "as belonged to a 'suckus'": "He taught me to put my leg round my neck, and I was just getting along nicely with the splits (going down on the ground with both legs extended), when I left him. They (the splits) used to hurt worst of all; very bad for the thighs" (282). The pain of the postures the "King" assumes, and the work involved in the performance itself, backs up the boy's statement to Mayhew that "we works hard for what we gets" (281), a statement further supported by "Mike," who says of his own tumbling, "I can't do it more than four times running, because it makes the blood to the head, and then all the things seems to turn round. Sometimes a chap will give me a lick with a stick just as I'm going over – sometimes a reg'lar good hard whack" (272). While the tumbling of the street boys may appear natural, playful, and exuberant, it is actually a skill that must be learned, and one that both requires effort and excites little respect.

These boys and their performance are therefore quite problematic for Mayhew. While he is fascinated by the community of boy crossing-sweepers and tumblers, and shows respect for their labours in the details he provides of the "art" of tumbling itself, he also, in his discussion of the "ease" with which the boys move, suggests that, while this tumbling might be hard work, it is not "industrious" – there is too much of play about it, despite the exertions it requires. He is also disturbed by the boys' duplicity – a duplicity, he suggests, that is intimately connected to the close relationship between performance

and begging. While interviewing Gander, Mayhew expresses frustration at the boy's tendency to deceit:

> It was perfectly impossible to obtain from this lad any account of his average earnings. The other boys in the gang told me that he made more than any of them. But Gander, who is a thorough street-beggar, and speaks with a peculiar whine, and who, directly you look at him, puts on an expression of the deepest distress, seemed to have made up his mind, that if he made himself out to be in great want I should most likely relieve him. (274)

Though these boys may work, and work hard, at what they do, it is still just a form of begging, and while they may be practicing an art, they also display artfulness. Gander "speaks" with a whine, and "puts on" facial expressions, even in his interview with Mayhew, suggesting that the boy's performance is perpetual – a learned response to life on the streets that the boy cannot easily put off, even when hectored by his companions (274). Their bodies trained to be flexible, and their minds accustomed to deceit, these boys show none of the transparency – none of the "truth of infancy" – evident in Norton's and Collins's depictions of child performers. The dangerous education they receive on the streets is therefore made manifest in the contrast between the appearance of youthful exuberance constructed by their tumbling, and the reality of their hard labour and their cunning as revealed through Mayhew's interviews of them.

While Mayhew asserts that "The female child can do little but *sell* (when a livelihood is to be gained without a recourse to immorality)" whereas "the boy can not only sell, but *work*" (169), he does include interviews with a few girls who work as crossing-sweepers. These girls, in turn, mention both boys and girls who work as crossing-sweepers, suggesting that the occupation is not one generally worked by boys alone. However, Mayhew is careful to elicit from both girl crossing-sweeps that they do not "stop out at night" (289, 291) when the boy crossing-sweepers take up their tumbling. Whether or not any girls take part in this tumbling is therefore difficult to ascertain, but what is clear in Mayhew's account is that it is a particular kind of girl whom the boy tumblers encounter during their night performances:

> After the Opera we go into the Haymarket, where all the women are who walk the streets all night. They don't give us no money, but they tell the gentleman to .... Sometimes a gentleman will tell us to go and get them a young lady, and then we goes, and they general gives us sixpence for that. If the gents is dressed finely we gets them a handsome girl; if they're dressed middling, then we gets them a middling-dressed one; but we usual prefers giving a turn to girls that have been kind to us, and they are sure to give us somethink the next night. (268-69)

Boys and girls may work as crossing-sweepers together during the day, but at night, their occupations are quite different. Both use their bodies as a means of earning money, but for the girls, apparently, prostitution is the only means of doing so. There is still performance involved, as the boy tumblers and the girl prostitutes have a kind of routine worked out by which they both profit from the gentlemen who walk the streets of the Haymarket. But if there is some admiration from Mayhew for the boys' tumbling performance, there is none here; not only are the women fallen and degraded by their occupation, but the boys too are complicit in it, participating in that fallenness.

Although girls and women undoubtedly engaged in performance on the streets in the evening, Mayhew seems only able to see women who work at prostitution. In fact, Mayhew even suggests that those girls who work selling in the streets are in fact performing as a means of procuring customers. Remarking that "I did not hear of any girls who had run away from their homes having become street-sellers merely" (164), Mayhew goes on to say that "They more generally fall into a course of prostitution, or sometimes may be ostensibly street-sellers as a means of accosting men, and, perhaps, for an attractive pretence to the depraved, that they are poor, innocent girls, struggling for an honest penny" (164). The performance these girl street sellers engage in is motivated by a deceitfulness born of the streets. These girls perform "honesty" and "innocence," but are anything but, and once removed from the relative safety of the parental home (relative because even the homes of the costermongers do not provide the kind of supervision and guidance girls require), "their ruin seems inevitable" (164).

While boys may tumble at night to supplement their earnings during the day, girls, Mayhew suggests, can only sell themselves. The labour is connected, however,

because both must perform, be cunning, and manipulate their audience in order to obtain a living. And, as in the case of the boy tumblers and the prostitutes in the Haymarket, their audience is the same. The gentlemen who watch the boys tumble also watch the women, as both the boys and the prostitutes put their bodies on display in the streets. What Mayhew does with his work is not so much to make the boys and girls of the street visible, as they are already exceptionally so, but to make them visible *as* children: that is, to call attention to the distance between what they should be and what they are. While he succeeds in making these children appear dangerous – in their deceitfulness, their immorality, and their manipulation of the public – he also wants to show that they are endangered. He therefore appeals to a wider audience, his reading audience, to see these children, and to recognize that "They have been either untaught, mistaught, maltreated, neglected, regularly trained to vice, or fairly turned into the streets to shift for themselves. The censure, then, is attributable to parents, or those who should fill the place of parents – the State, or society" (161). These children, Mayhew asserts, require saving, not just on their own behalf, but also on behalf of the children with whom they come into contact, because "Mixed with the children who really *sell* in the streets, are the class who assume to sell that they may have the better chance to steal, or the greater facility to beg" (161 original italics). The "mixing" of the children of the street, so that those who sell come to associate (and be associated) with those who perform, and those who perform come to associate (and be associated) with those who prostitute, lends urgency to Mayhew's call for his readers to see street children differently: not to take pleasure in watching their bodies, but to think how such children can be saved.

The problem of child street performance, and, in fact, of child presence in the streets in any capacity, was partially solved by the Education Acts of the 1870s and 1880s, which effectively removed many children from the streets and placed them within the school. And, by 1872, Lord Shaftesbury had "introduced a private bill designed to protect the lives and limbs of acrobat children" (Assael 146). The bill provoked resistance upon various points,[3] but by 1879, the Children's Dangerous Performances Act was passed into law. This Act "prohibited the employment of any child under 14 in a performance that was dangerous to life or limb" (Steedman 132), thus protecting children engaged in novelty acts, such as "acrobats, stilt-walkers, rope-dancers, children shot from

cannons, [and] contortionists" (132). However, "children employed in dangerous performances represented a tiny proportion of the industry" (132). Furthermore, many feared (and warned) that the Act "would not stop the practice" of child performance, because "the itinerant lifestyle of many of these performers made them unlikely candidates for legal control, regardless of state intervention" (Assael 149). And finally, the Act did not contain provisions restricting training, because "there remained the practical difficulty of how to police private households in which the alleged cruel training took place. The surveillance of homes, if put into law, would intrude on the rights of freeborn Englishmen to the privacy of their homes" (150).

Therefore, while the Education Acts and the Dangerous Performances Act of 1879 did much to restrict child performances, neither addressed the problem of itinerant families who worked in the theatre or circus. Because "children who performed with troupes usually did not remain in any community long enough to warrant registration in a local school district" (Assael 150), they often escaped the disciplinary apparatus of school boards. Furthermore, as long as the dangers they faced occurred within the home, and were not of a kind to be restricted as a "Dangerous Performance" – i.e., one that would cause physical harm – child performers still failed to receive the protection of the law. In the later years of the nineteenth century, therefore, it was the role of the parent in child performance, and the moral, rather than merely physical dangers faced by the child performer, that were to arouse the greatest concern.

Pantomime Waifs: "A Peep Behind the Scenes" and the Seductive Power of Performance

Because those who performed on the streets of the cities often also worked in the surrounding countryside, discourse about "theatre waifs" tended to collapse concerns about child performers with concerns about street children. As Mayhew observes of women who work on the streets, "The muscular irritability begotten by continued wandering makes her unable to rest for any time in one place .... The least restraint makes her sigh after the perfect liberty of the coster's 'roving life'" (46). And, as Brenda Assael notes about child acrobats in the nineteenth century, "Despite their public role in the ring, the itinerant status of these children, who traveled with tenting companies or moved from one resident company to the next, obviously made them difficult to trace – a

fact that only heightened public anxiety about their work" (136). In both the cases of the "roving" costermonger and the travelling child performer, there is no home in which children can lead a "settled" existence. The "roving" nature of the work of the travelling child performer, combined with concerns about both the immorality of the stage and the physical hardship suffered by children within it, therefore made the travelling theatre or circus somewhat akin to the street.

It is not surprising, then, that one of the best-selling books written for children, O. F. Walton's *A Peep Behind the Scenes* (1877), combines an Evangelical depiction of the "street waif" with a narrative about a travelling circus.[4] For strict Evangelicals, the stage was a place of danger for children, not simply because of the physical threats it contained, but more importantly, because of the moral dangers it represented: "actors, acrobats, dancers, and magicians were all represented in Evangelical literature as hawking the trash of Vanity Fair to lure the weak and the young into the broad way of destruction" (Cutt 160). Destruction by theatre came about, according to Evangelicals, through the "deception" of the performance itself, through the wasted time spent participating in or witnessing such events, and through the (assumed) immorality of actors, acrobats, and performers themselves. The theatre endangered, therefore, both those children employed within it, and those who were its witnesses. Acrobatics was seen as particularly pernicious, because of the "unnatural" and "immoral" postures the child assumed, but cherished English traditions such as the pantomime were also targeted in this fiction.

"Waif novels," a genre within Sunday-school fiction[5] which was "influenced by discourses on ragged children, nineteen-century didactic writing for children, sentimental fiction and reports by social reformers" (Assael 137), tended to focus upon idealized depictions of slum children, in which the "poor child was the means of redemption for an adult" (Cunningham, *Children of the Poor* 139). In this genre, the savage child of the street is replaced by the innocent, inherently holy child who represents both the ideal subject of evangelizing, and the means by which the conversions of the chosen around her take place. In texts such as *A Peep Behind the Scenes*, for example, the child's endangerment is not registered through the shocked awareness of distance between the savage, impoverished child and the ideal, middle class child – that moment when the

observer must ask "is this a child?" – but instead through the recognition of the distance between the true, innocent ideal child and the fallen or degraded environment in which it is portrayed. The "truth of infancy" in the Evangelical waif novel, as in Collins's text, is what allows the child to escape the ravages of its environment, and to exist not only as the means of redemption for others, but also as the ideal candidate for rescue.

One of the most influential children's books of its time, Hesba Stretton's *Jessica's First Prayer* (1867),[6] focuses on the redemptive qualities of Jessica, a former pantomime actress and a current street waif, who brings about a change in spirit in Daniel, the miserly owner of a coffee-stall, and is in turn saved by him from her drunken mother and her life of poverty. The success of this novel "led to a stream of similar tales" (Cunningham, *Children of the Poor* 139), a significant number of which dealt with child performers. As Brenda Assael argues,

> That a discrete body of waif novels featured the child acrobat as a subject for rescue is significant not only because many believed that the performer's real-life counterpart was in need of saving but also because the street, the stage, or the circus ring provided a provocative fictional venue where a nightmarish world beset by cruelty could be spectacularly witnessed by the reading public, which included middle-class and working-class children .... The contrast between the rational recreation of reading and the irrationality of performing as it appeared in the waif novel, could not have been made more stark. (141-42)

The importance of reaching a child audience with tales about the true horrors of theatre and circus life was spurred by the growth of the theatrical industry in the second half of the nineteenth century. After the Theatre Regulation Act of 1843, "there followed a rapid expansion of theatrical outlets at all levels of the market, particularly as working-class entertainment" (Steedman 130),[7] which "increased employment opportunities on the stage for women and children of the working and lower-middle classes" (130). Furthermore, "By 1877, circus, pantomime and amateur theatricals had become accepted juvenile entertainment" (160). Evangelical novels that focused on the dangers of theatrical life, therefore, sought to save both those children who worked in the theatre

itself, and those children who were witnesses to the child on stage and were themselves seduced by the pleasure of its performance.

Rather than rejecting the pull of imagination and fancy, however, Evangelical writers such as Walton instead used fairy-tale structures and sentiment as a means of locating "fairyland" in the world of home, religion, and morality. In *A Peep Behind the Scenes*, Walton tells the story of Rosalie, a circus waif, who "is exploited by her drunken father, acquires a cruel stepmother and a kind of fairy godmother in the shape of a circus dwarf, Mother Manikin, and eventually finds a home with her mother's long-lost sister's family in a country vicarage" (Brown 89). Throughout the novel, Walton includes detailed descriptions of circus life, always placing them in sharp contrast to the ways in which outsiders perceive the circus. In particular, Walton demonstrates the pull of the theatre for children:

> About twelve o'clock, they came up to a little village where they halted for a short time so the horses might rest before going farther. The country children were just leaving the village school, and they gathered round the caravans with open eyes and mouths, staring curiously at the smoke coming from the small chimneys, and at Rosalie, who was peeping out from the muslin curtains. (Walton[i])

Like Louisa and Tom Gradgrind, these children are fascinated by the circus, and their open-mouthed curiosity speaks to the seductive power of the theatre. Rosalie herself is equally an object of curiosity, but also of envy, as witnessed by the reaction she arouses in some of the children who see her: "'Don't you wish you was her?' said one of the little boys to the other. 'Ay!' said the little fellow; 'I wish *our* house would move about, and had little windows with white curtains and pink bows!'" (Walton). Walton therefore acknowledges the attraction of both the novelty of Rosalie's life, and of the circus itself, but she also allows her reader to "peep behind the scenes" to the interior of this house: "It was a very small place; there was hardly room for him to stand .... There was not room for much furniture in the small caravan; a tiny stove, the chimney of which went through the wooden roof, a few pans, a shelf containing cups and saucers, and two boxes which served as seats, completely filled it" (Walton). Though Rosalie's home may seem

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[i] Quotations are from an e-text of Walton's work that is not paginated.

attractive and whimsical to the children watching, Walton reveals its shabbiness, as well as the pain within it, for Rosalie's mother is desperately ill, and her father is violent and demanding. Though the house may inspire envy in those children who gaze upon it, it is not, Walton makes clear, a home.

Although the theatre allows Louisa and Tom Gradgrind a glimpse of the childhood world of fancy and imagination that they have been denied, the townschildren in Walton's text have a proper home to which they return, as "after satisfying their curiosity, they moved away in little groups to their various homes, so that they might be in time for dinner" (Walton). In *A Peep Behind the Scenes*, it is, instead, the girl in the circus, Rosalie, who is "peeping out" from the caravan in an attempt to catch a glimpse of the world of proper home and family that she herself is lacking. By comparing Rosalie, in the caravan peeping out at the town and countryside, to the children peeping in, hoping to get a glance at the magic and wonders of the circus, Walton suggests that, for the waif, it is the world outside the theatre that holds magic. Rosalie's gaze upon a road-side cottage and the domesticity enacted upon its front-steps, and upon a church in the town at which she catches only a "peep" – "ever so pretty, mammie dear; such soft grass and such lovely roses, and a broad gravel walk all up to the door" (Walton) – transforms the mundane world of everyday life into one of wonder. For Rosalie, the pull of the countryside, with its pastoral landscape, is its sharp contrast to the shabbiness of the world in which she lives.

But if the countryside seems magical and seductive to her, it is nonetheless real and true. Although the children who gaze, open-mouthed, at the caravan are deceived by the glamour of the circus, a glamour that obscures the cruelty, ugliness, and poverty of those within, Rosalie finds only truth as a result of her desire to see and to know more about the life the cottage represents. At the end of the novel, it is in a similar cottage that Rosalie begins to live happily ever after:

> Rosalie did not grow tired of her green pasture, nor did she wish to wander into the wide world beyond. As she grew older, and saw from what she had been saved, she became more and more thankful. She was not easily deceived by the world's glitter and glare and vain show; for Rosalie had

> been behind the scenes, and knew how empty and hollow and miserable everything worldly was. (Walton)

The cottage and "green pasture" where Rosalie makes her home fulfils the promise of the pastoral landscape which had first captured Rosalie's imagination. Her education in the world "behind the scenes" makes her appreciate the benefits of respectability, and allows her to be satisfied with her salvation through a life of domesticity.

Through Rosalie's realization of the falseness of "the world's glitter and glare and vain show," Walton seeks to educate her child readers in the importance of accepting reality as it is, something that Rosalie's performance most definitely does not do:

> There were many young girls there, some of them servants in respectable families, where they enjoyed every comfort; yet they looked up at little Rosalie with eyes of admiration and envy. They thought her life was much happier than theirs, and that her lot was greatly to be desired. They looked at the white dress and the pink roses, and contrasted them with their own warm but homely garments; they watched the pretty girl going through her part gracefully and easily, and they contrasted her work with theirs. How interesting, how delightful, they thought, to be doing this, instead of scrubbing floors, or washing clothes, or nursing children! (Walton)

The danger inherent in Rosalie's performance is not just the immorality to which she has been exposed through the long hours that she works and the brutality that she faces from her father, but also the deception to which her audience is exposed. Rosalie's performance inspires dissatisfaction in those who watch her: dissatisfaction with their work, dissatisfaction with their station in life, and dissatisfaction with the benefits of respectability and homeliness.

Rosalie is therefore a somewhat problematic figure. Though her beauty and her innocence are a source of continual comment throughout the text, the proof that she is untouched by the polluting influence of the world around her, they are also the means by which she seduces and deceives her audience. When Rosalie dresses for her performance, Walton draws attention to the "contrast Rosalie looked to the rest of the caravan": "The shabby furniture, the thin, wasted mother, the dirty, torn little frock she

had just laid aside, were quite out of keeping with the pretty little white-robed figure which stood by the bed" (Walton). Walton again uses the contrast between Rosalie in her costume and the interior of the caravan as a means of revealing the deception of the theatre world, as Rosalie's rich costume only serves to highlight the miserable conditions in which she has to live. However, Rosalie's costume also serves to demonstrate the distance between the child and her surroundings. Her environment is "out of keeping" with her, and it is the costume that reveals the truth of her unfitness for the world in which she lives and works.

But if the donning of a pretty white dress – as opposed to the "dirty, torn little frock she had laid aside" – reveals Rosalie's potential for salvation, in that it demonstrates her separation from the shabbiness of her home and thus makes possible her final salvation from it, it is also the means by which she seduces those who watch her. In Walton's text, the seductive power of Rosalie's performance is one that will speak to Walton's reading audience of working- and middle-class children: the promise of excitement and glamour, of pretty things, and easy labour. But the focus on Rosalie's pretty figure upon the stage speaks to another power of seduction: that of the stage child engaging in a kind of prostitution. These two things were not necessarily separate, as concerns about the effects of the stage life upon children, particularly after the Dangerous Performances Act of 1879, centred on the extent to which that life made them "much less childlike, and demand more excitement" (qtd. in Steedman 136). The "demand for excitement" is linked to a loss of childishness, to what Ellen Barlee identified in *Pantomime Waifs* as "a sad and evil precociousness" (qtd. in Behlmer 104). This precociousness, according to Barlee, spoke both to the environment in which the children lived, as well as to their comprehension of their own powers, for "what marked all stage children, of whatever class, was their 'insatiable thirst for admiration.' They were children who were very used to being watched, and to seeing themselves as objects of someone else's contemplation" (Steedman 136).

As Carolyn Steedman notes, "some commentators of the 1880s were utterly certain of the correlation between sexual desire for the child and its public display" (140), particularly in the wake of W. T. Stead's "The Maiden Tribute of Modern Babylon."[8] While such a correlation had been (and continued to be) drawn in regards to female child

acrobats,[9] it was also applied to girl-children who worked in the pantomime and ballet, whose scanty costumes and, it was feared, provocative poses drew parallels between the child-actor and child prostitution and pornography. Tights, in particular, were seen as pernicious, as they "effaced the divisions of the leg that training for the classical dance had established (foot, ankle, knee and thigh), and … by a single sweep of flesh-pink worsted, they drew the eye smoothly upwards, towards the place where they ended" (Steedman 141). However, while the audience, the child itself, and opponents of child employment in the theatre were aware "of the sexual meaning of this clothing, and the kind of attention it attracted" (142), "Pressure groups like the National Vigilance Association[10] and other parties interested in stage censorship often experienced extreme difficulty in bringing charges of obscenity against certain stage performances, because they were unable either to read or to articulate the pornographic code that made some acts so disturbing" (141). Though the connection between the child performer and the prostitute was commonly recognized and understood, therefore, it was not necessarily explicit, and as such, often failed to register under the laws regulating the theatre.

While the Dangerous Performances Act of 1879 did much to protect children who were physically endangered in the theatrical profession, and while the Education Acts of the 1870s and 80s did much to remove children from improper employment on the street and the stage, and provide them with proper (unpaid) employment within the school system, children such as Rosalie – itinerant; at the mercy of her father; and morally, rather than physically, endangered – remained essentially invisible in terms of legislation and regulation. Writers such as Walton were able to use the imaginative space of the novel to allow their readers a glimpse "behind the scenes" of Rosalie's home life, but the law, as yet, had no such power. It would take the emergence of child protection and the passage of the "Children's Charter" to make children like Rosalie visible not just before an actual or reading audience, but before the law.

Child Performance and the "Children's Charter"

Those who were concerned about the effects of performance, both moral and physical, upon the child performer, and upon the role that parents, such as Rosalie's father, played in exploiting their own children, placed great hopes in the emergent field of child

protection as a means of addressing these concerns. At the time of his death, Lord Shaftesbury purportedly sent for Benjamin Waugh, placed Barlee's *Pantomime Waifs* in his hands, and begged him to "right those wrongs" (Behlmer 104). Waugh and the London SPCC were an obvious choice for Shaftesbury's appeal because this organization sought to extend its gaze within the home itself. In "The Child of the English Savage," Waugh and Manning had argued "that cruelty is done chiefly where its doer is most secure from detection, and where no one has a right to follow him – in the man's own 'castle,' as a common saying has it, or, more appropriately, in his own dungeon" (639). In the London SPCC's efforts to bring about new legislation, it wished to make that home more open to public scrutiny, to put into place that "surveillance of homes" (Assael 150) that had seemed such an impossibility in the Dangerous Performances Act of 1879.

The emergence of child protection therefore allowed for a new understanding of child performance: that of the child performer as an abused child. In reporting on a criminal case in 1889, involving a father who had murdered the leader of a troupe in which his daughter died, Waugh was careful to explain that the Society had no desire to "prejudice the case, which must come before the approaching Assizes" ("An Invalid Child Acrobat" 113). Yet his decision to relate the particulars of the case in order to "enable fathers to understand what it was that preyed upon the mind of the man who now stands charged with the wilful murder of the master of his dead girl" (113) demonstrates his sympathy with, if not justification of, that man's actions. Told in "the child's own words" (113), the story describes how the girl, increasingly ill and wasting away, was forced to perform: "The doctor said I must have rest. I had no rest. I had to perform four times each day .... Master shouted at me once, I remembered, and offered to hit me" (114). Her account is very similar to Collins's and Walton's depictions of child performance, but in the context of *The Child's Guardian*, it takes on new significance. Rather than participating in a distasteful or even abhorrent display of cruelty, as does Collins's Mr. Jubber and Rosalie's father, this troupe proprietor commits a crime, one that the London SPCC could have stopped had the father not taken the law into his own hands.

The implication that the Society should have been alerted to the abuses occurring within this troupe points to another change brought about in the theatrical world by the

emergence of child protection. Not only were child performers transformed into possible subjects of legal protection, but the audience members were themselves transformed, in the London SPCC's rhetoric, from willing participants to useful informants. In the February 1887 issue of *The Child's Guardian*, readers were "urged to keep a close watch, especially on the lower kind of circus and traveling show, and to report suspicious circumstances to 7, Harpur Street,[11] at once" ("Notes" CG 1:2, 14). And in the February 1889 issue Waugh asked, "Will our friends look for a traveling show with 'the celebrated female pugilist' as part of its attraction; and on finding it, at once send us word of its whereabouts. We are anxious to see it" ("Notes" CG 3:26, 25). Both of these "Notes" to the readers of *The Child's Guardian* demonstrate the new role that the London SPCC gave to audience members throughout England. Norton, Collins, Mayhew, and Walton all displayed anxieties within their works about the ways in which audiences watched children perform: with pleasure, with thoughtlessness, and even possibly with desire. By encouraging audiences to "keep a close watch" on child performance in order to identify possible cases of cruelty, the Society instructed its readers in the proper response to the child's body in performance. Furthermore, such instruction empowered its readers, combating that "impotent watching of children's distress" (Steedman 31) betrayed within the earlier texts.

However, the appeal to the readers of *The Child's Guardian* to "keep a close watch" on child performance also, interestingly enough, justified the very activity of watching these performances. By granting power to the audience to discern cruelty and abuse when and where they saw it, the London SPCC tacitly acknowledged that not all child performance constituted cruelty – that while one must constantly observe the child performer for signs of abuse and suffering, that child performance itself was not abuse. Such a stance may have been adopted as a result of the continuing battle being waged in parliament over the meaning and significance of child performance. In 1888, the Bill for the Better Prevention of Cruelty to Children had met opposition from the Band of Hope movement, the youth auxiliary of the Temperance Movement, because "this group feared that restrictions on the employment of children in public entertainment might jeopardize its penny readings, parades, and choir competitions" (Behlmer 100). The London SPCC, however, "sought only to discourage sending children to sing and dance in unwholesome

environments (such as public houses); it had no wish to prevent performances associated with legitimate philanthropy" (100). In terms of non-philanthropic entertainment, however, the bill stood firm, calling for the "prohibition of theatrical work for those under the age of ten" (105). This proposed restriction of child employment in the theatre met with strong opposition: from those who argued that such a law would cause hardship to working-class families employed in the industry, and from those who "protested that the new outburst of reformist fervor threatened to destroy 'many of the performances and plays which have been popular with the British people for generations'" (106). In the end, opposition to this portion of the bill forced an amendment "allowing children between the ages of seven and ten to perform in theaters, provided that they were licensed to do so by a magistrate" (108). "Reformist fervor" aside, child performance at the end of the century remained the exception to the rule of child labour restriction in England. The "Children's Charter" empowered magistrates to provide licenses to theatrical proprietors, allowing them to employ children "if satisfied of the fitness of the child for the purpose, and if it is shown to their satisfaction that proper provision has been made to secure the health and kind treatment of the children taking part in the entertainment" (Hall, *The Law Relating to Children* 73). Furthermore, restrictions on child performance did not apply "in the case of any occasional sale or entertainment the net proceeds of which are wholly applied for the benefit of any school or to any charitable object" (72).

The newly-reconstituted NSPCC had learned, both from the experience of SPCCs in the United States, and from the opposition that it faced in its own battle to restrict child performance through anti-cruelty legislation, that child performance elicited as much pleasure as it did concern. The New York SPCC's successful restriction of child performance was met with scorn by some commentators, who asked "what cruelty is there in permitting a precocious, agile, and healthy child to dance before an audience or to take a part in any drama or musical entertainment adapted to children, when the child is not exposed to danger or physical injury?" (Dailey 379). The New York Society, far from being seen as the protector of children, is here depicted as somehow ruining their fun, imposing restrictions upon a child who longs to demonstrate its own health, grace, and agility. Furthermore, the question the London SPCC had faced during its own battle for new legislation of "What … would *Midsummer Night's Dream* be without its 'little

fairies'" (qtd. in Behlmer 106), proves that the fight to preserve child performance in England was as much about the pleasure derived from watching them, as about the pleasure the children themselves might experience in performing.

By combating the abuses that went on within the theatre rather than the theatre itself, the NSPCC therefore successfully avoided the pitfalls associated with restricting performance. But perhaps more importantly, such a stance enabled the NSPCC itself to benefit from child performance. The NSPCC struggled throughout the 1890s to raise enough funds to support its rapid expansion throughout England, and in December 1891, the Society founded a youth auxiliary group, the Children's League of Pity, in response to that need. While the goal of the "Leaguers" was to raise funds for the society through canvassing amongst their friends and family, and through staging sales and performances, this work on behalf of abused children was also defended as beneficial to the Leaguers themselves, because the League provided "great chances of training up children to ennobling sentiments" ("Notes" CG 7:10, 134).

While the performances staged by Leaguers served the noble purpose of supporting the Society and of encouraging compassion in the Leaguers themselves, they also succeeded in providing pleasure for their adult audiences. An article in *The Children's League of Pity Paper* entitled "Living Pictures" lauds one such performance by the Leaguers of Eastbourne. In describing the tableaux, the author mentions that "The pictures were sustained entirely by children, and were admirable in every way, the set and pose of the various characters being full of charm and interest to the audience, who were loud in their praises of the little executants" (Bolton, "Living Pictures," 82). Here, performance by children is very much to be praised, because the children show industry in "sustaining" the performance entirely on their own, and therefore, far from being understood as pernicious, this performance is instead "admirable" and "full of charm." A performance at a "Japanese Garden Party" by the Norwich Leaguers, who are held up to the readers of the journal as "A Branch to be copied," provokes a similar reaction:

> the hands of most willing helpers quickly transformed our school dining-room and large class-room into two prettily decorated tea-rooms, when numerous Leaguers, all clothed in wonderful Japanese costumes of every colour of the rainbow, busied themselves in waiting on the guests. All

> subsequently adjourned to the playground, as the sun was beginning to peep through the clouds, and here the Leaguers entertained our visitors with Japanese songs, fan-drill, and umbrella-drill, all of which seemed to give much pleasure. (Bolton, "A Branch to Be Copied," 11)

Again, the industriousness of these children for the sake of a good cause is portrayed as praiseworthy, as the "willing helpers" who "busied themselves" in staging this event are held up as an example to other Leaguers. For children to perform in the service of a good cause, it would seem, is to be industrious in the proper sphere, and allow adults to feel unqualified pleasure in watching that performance.

These child performers fail to provoke anxiety, I would argue, because they are, essentially, amateurs. Leaguers were generally "well-to-do" children,[12] and their performances, though in the service of a good cause, have as much to do with play as they do with labour. Their tableaux and dances, therefore, bring pleasure to their audience through the childishness that is displayed in them. Like Collins's Madonna, these child performers are successful because they do not truly perform; instead, they give the audience the pleasure of seeing a child be a child. That is, the child appears most child-like when it attempts to play adult roles – such as organizing and staging a performance, or holding a tea and waiting on guests. As Carolyn Steedman notes, "A middle-class appreciation of the child on the stage was of a miniature participant in adult life, with much delight taken in the contrast .... What is 'priceless' in the child's performance is its attempt to be part of the adult world, and the very uselessness of that attempt" (144). The "uselessness of that attempt" is, in the case of the Leaguers and of other children who participated in amateur performance, dependent upon the fact that the child performer cannot jeopardize its own dependence, its own child-like insufficiency, by earning wages.

Though paid child performance elicited concerns because of the "precociousness" of those children who worked in the street, the circus, and the stage, amateur child theatricals confirmed the child's preciousness, its need for imagination and play, and its separation from adult concerns and anxieties. Far from being a danger to the child, amateur theatricals instead celebrated the ideal child, and provided unadulterated adult pleasure in the observation of the child's body on display. Where individuals or troupes

benefited from a child's labour, restrictions, licenses, and an audience trained to watch for abuse were considered necessary. Where charitable performances were concerned, no restrictions were imposed. Therefore, it would seem, financial gain was the essential factor in "dangerous" performances for children. As long as a child gained nothing for itself and or for its family, its performance required nothing but applause.

Notes

[1] "Mad and mysterious words, never heard before in Rubbleford, poured from his lips. 'Devotional beauty', 'Fra Angelico's angels', 'Giotto and the cherubs', 'Enough to bring the divine Raphael down from heaven to paint her'" (Collins, *Hide and Seek* 60).

[2] In the section on "Street Entertainment" in volume three of *London Labour and the London Poor*, Mayhew interviews a "Scotch Piper," who is accompanied in his rambles "about the country" (330) and in his performances on the street by his daughter, who dances "the Highland fling and the sword-dance called 'Killim Callam'" (330). The Scotch Piper is a good example of how street performers in the city also, during the appropriate seasons, ventured out across the country to perform in towns and villages.

The Italian padroni system refers to the exportation of Italian children into England as apprentices to adult street performers. Chapters six and seven of Carolyn Steedman's *Strange Dislocations* provides an analysis of the responses to this particular "category" (to use Mayhew's terms) of street performer.

[3] Brenda Assael lists as some of the obstacles faced in the effort to protect child acrobats debates about the limits of state intervention, about the "age group the bill was meant to protect" (216), and about the effect such legislation would have upon working-class families who were employed within the theatrical industry (217).

[4] According to Margaret Nancy Cutt, "*A Peep Behind the Scenes* was, in its time, almost every little girl's favourite book" (160), and "was one of the best-known children's tales of the century. This assessment is supported by Penny Brown, who states that "in a survey carried out in 1884 [O. F. Walton] was one of the nine top favourite authors among girls of 11 and upwards, together with Dickens, Charlotte Yonge, Charles Kingsley, and Hesba Stretton" (88).

[5] As Cutt argues in *Ministering Angels*, "by 1810 new writers for children were mostly Evangelicals or Evangelical sympathizers, their work being a calculated part of the Evangelical determination to reform and convert the nation and eventually the world" (20). Publishing companies such as the Society for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge (SPCK) and the Religious Tract Society (RTS) produced both the majority of fiction for children and "a constant supply of cheap printed matter," without which "children's libraries in the poorer homes of the last century would have been scanty indeed" (31). Early Evangelical tracts owed much to the rationalism of Hannah More's Cheap Repository Tracts, though they worked to "replace the Rule of Reason in children's books [with] the Rule of Religion" (18). However, by the mid-nineteenth century, Evangelical fiction showed the influence of popular literature and moved away from strict moralism towards sentiment and pathos as the primary means of instruction. The street "waif," exemplified by a poor, isolated child, surrounded by physical and moral degradation, and yet capable of piety, innocence and purity, became a popular figure within the works of F. W. Robinson, O. F. Walton, and Hesba Stretton, to name a few.

[6] According to Nancy Cutt in *Ministering Angels*, "Two million copies [of *Jessica's First Prayer*] are said to have been printed by the time of [Stretton's] death in 1911, and within five years of publication, the tale was in translation all over the world" (135).

[7] According to Steedman, "Until the Theatre Regulation Act of 1843, only licensed theatres were allowed to present entirely 'spoken theatrical activity.' In order to stay within the letter of the law, all other places of entertainment had used the strategy of interspersing music, dance, acrobat, gymnastic, and other novelty turns with drama and melodrama .... The Theatre Act freed the theatre from monopoly, but also helped bring about the stratification of the entertainment industry, distinguishing clearly between the theatre and other premises where the sale and consumption of drink was allowed in the auditorium" (130).

[8] W. T. Stead's "Maiden Tribute of Modern Babylon," published in the *Pall Mall Gazette* in 1885, created a moral panic in England with its sensationalized representation of "white slavery" in England. For more, see endnote in Chapter Four.

[9] "In *The Mountebank's Children*, Milly wears a tight bodice, and bends into a hoop … showing her audience her frontal anatomy which, according to the author, could only serve to demoralize her" (Assael 214).

[10] The National Vigilance Association (NVA) "emerged in the campaign for the 1885 Criminal Law Amendment Act ostensibly to protect children, but it was increasingly concerned with all aspects of public morality. The list of prominent NVA activists reflected the close relationship between child rescue and sexual purity: W. T. Stead conceived the NVA; the Reverend Benjamin Waugh, Secretary of the NSPCC, was a council member; Samuel Smith, MP, founding father of the Liverpool SPCC, acted as chief spokesman on obscenity; and Donald Maclean, MP, acted as solicitor for both the NSPCC and the NVA" (Hendrick 39).

[11] The NSPCC's address in London.

[12] See Chapter Four.

Chapter Three
"Cannibalism in England": Commerce, Consumption, and Endangered Childhood

In *Past and Present* (1843), Thomas Carlyle tells of a "Stockport Mother and Father" who were "found guilty of poisoning three of their children, to defraud a burial-society of some *3l. 8s.* on the death of each child" (4). Carlyle suggests that such a crime meets only with disgust – "'Brutal savages, degraded Irish,' mutters the idle reader of Newspapers; hardly lingering on this incident" (4) – but argues that it should be, instead, read as a sign of the condition of England, as an act to which the parent have been "driven" (4) by poverty and starvation. Rather than dismissing the parents as mere "savages," then, Carlyle imagines the "committee of ways and means" by which these parents came to their fateful decision:

> Our poor little starveling Tom, who cries all day for victuals, who will see only evil and not good in this world: if he were out of misery at once; he well dead, and the rest of us perhaps kept alive? It is thought, and hinted; at last it is done. And now Tom being killed, and all spent and eaten, Is it poor little starveling Jack that must go, or poor little starveling Will? (4)

This family's wretched preoccupation with "starvation" and with "victuals" translates into a kind of cannibalism, in which the child who cries for food becomes the child murdered so that others might be fed. Though gruesome, however, this choice is one for which Carlyle betrays a kind of sympathy, or at least a recognition of the role that desperation, combined with temptation in the form of the children's burial insurance, might have played in these parents' decision to kill their children. Such desperation, Carlyle argues, is intimately connected to England's commerce: a commerce that produces "plethoric plenty" (6) while England's people "perish" (6). In such conditions, Carlyle suggests, the starving family has little choice but to engage in a crude commerce of their own, converting their family into a "committee of ways and means," and their children into commodities.

Carlyle's preoccupation with the influence of commerce upon the home and the family speaks, I would argue, to an anxiety that was continually reiterated in nineteenth-century texts. In particular, as I suggested at the end of the previous chapter, the contamination of the domestic sphere by financial concerns was perceived to be

inherently threatening to childhood. This "contamination" could occur when the home itself became a place of work, when the child was called upon to work to support the home, or when, as in the case of the Stockport family, the child itself had some kind of monetary value. As discussed in the introduction, the nineteenth century saw the transition between residual conceptions of the child as a productive, working member of the family (particularly within lower- and working-class homes) and the emergent conception of the child as an economic dependent, both in the family and society. This transition coincided with the transformation of the middle-class home into a separate "sphere," one which was to be set apart from the commercial transactions of the middle-class male, so as to preserve its integrity as a space of morality, security, and comfort. I will argue, however, that anxiety about the deleterious effects of commerce upon the lives of children demonstrates the extent to which this separation was perceived to be always at risk. Children who laboured or, worse, represented a kind of commodity to their parents, threatened not only the emergent conception of childhood dependence and "freedom" from adult concerns, but also the sanctity of the home as a space wholly apart from the harmful effects of commercial activity.

In an analysis of texts that concern themselves with the influence of commerce upon both working-class and middle-class families, and of the NSPCC's involvement in the child-life insurance debate of the late nineteenth century, I will argue that narratives about the interconnectedness of home and work, and of family and fortune, sought to create a balance between what were perceived to be the defining characteristics of England: its industry and wealth, on the one hand, and its domestic virtues, on the other. In seeking to negotiate the relationship between hunger, consumption, and production in the domestic space, such narratives work to redefine not only the nature of child suffering, but also the role of parental responsibility and affection for the child within the home. For if these narratives delineate commerce as a primary cause of child endangerment, as I believe they do, they also displace questions of social and economic imbalance with narratives of proper affective relationships between parents and children. Love, within these varied texts, serves an important ideological function, as it represents either the means by which families achieve a balance between financial necessity and happy domesticity, or, a crucial lack within the home itself that leads to the commercial

use and abuse of its children. In tracing the development of representations of the child as victim of commerce, therefore, I will argue that by the end of the nineteenth century, this figure becomes read not as a sign of necessity and privation, but as a sign of its parents' failure to provide proper care and affection.

Necessity and Tyranny: Narratives of Child Labour in Early-Nineteenth Century Literature

As Penny Brown points out, "In the late eighteenth century, many writers spoke approvingly of child labour for, at a period of widespread unemployment with the very real threat of starvation for an increasing population, the ability to work was seen as a question of survival" (65). Children of the poor had always been employed, wherever possible, but "the coming of steam power created a great demand for children in textiles in the early nineteenth century" (Rose 3). Even as late as 1834, when many in England began to be concerned about the conditions of child labour in factories, "the unemployment and underemployment of children was perceived … to be as great a problem as the exploitation of their labour" (Cunningham, "The Employment and Unemployment of Children" 40). The work of the children of the poor, therefore, was seen as intimately connected to the lower- and working-class family's well-being, because without that labour, the child, and its parents, might starve.

By the 1830s, however, the child labourer began to be seen "as a victim and a slave" (Cunningham, *Children of the Poor* 87), a revolution in thinking about childhood that Cunningham links to "debates about slavery and freedom, and the emergence of a romantic conception of the child" (51). Although concerns about child employment had been expressed even in the late 18th century,[1] it was only the publication of the reports of the Select Committee on the Labour of Children in the Mills and Factories, and the First Report on the Employment of Children in Factories that marked "the first significant point of successful intervention, leading as [they] did to the Factory Regulation Act of 1833" (Robson 62). As a result of these various interventions, child employment in factories went from being a boon to poor families, and to the domestic economy, to being England's greatest shame.

Anti-child labour activists were undoubtedly moved by reports of the harsh conditions in which children worked in the factories, but there is evidence to suggest that

children were not significantly more endangered by this labour than they were by domestic and cottage-industry work.[2] In the factories, however, children were believed to be in greater spiritual danger, and concerns on behalf of children employed in the factories were (in part) motivated by the perception that this kind of work disrupted familial and communal ties. Many families had to move outside of their parish in order to obtain factory employment for their children, and those children who worked in the factories often did so without the guidance and supervision of their parents. A report from the 1831-2 Select Committee on Children, Mills and Factories highlighted the dangerous influence of factory life upon children, with claims from witnesses that "most of that [the children's bad language and immorality] goes on towards night, when they begin to be drowsy; it is a kind of stimulus which they use to keep themselves from drowsiness, and it generally happens to be some obscene language" (qtd. in Robson 60-61). The nature of factory work requires these children to be "stimulated," and the stimulus they have learned emulates those in charge of them, who, as one question put to these witnesses made clear, do not have the children's moral welfare in mind: "Is not conduct grossly indecent often practised by those who have the control over these children in the factories?" (qtd. in Robson 61).

Child labour in the factories was perceived to be harmful not only to the children themselves, however, but also to their families. In *A Voice from the Factories*, Caroline Norton depicts the life of a child factory-labourer, whose days are spent surrounded by "sounds of wailing grief and painful blows" (XLVII. 1) and by companions who enjoy only a "base and saddening merriment" (XLVIII. 2). Upon returning home, the child is met by "his remorseful Mother" (XLIX. 5) who "tempts in vain / With the best portion of their frugal fare" (5-6). The mother's remorse makes it evident that this "frugal fare" is bought with her child's labour, but it is food that the child is "Too sick to eat .... He turns him idly from the untasted share, / Slumbering sinks down unfed, and mocks her useless care" (7-9). This home presents a nightmarish contrast to the ideal home Norton describes immediately prior, in which "the good man goes to seek the twilight rest of home" (XXXII. 9), and find refuge from his labours, where he "shut out the world's associate throng, / And closed the busy day's fatiguing hum" (5-6). Within, he and his wife "*together* pass their happy lives" (XXXIV. 3, original italics), while around them

"Scattered like flowers, the rosy children play" (XXXV. 1). In this, one of the "happy homes of England" (XXXII. 1), the burden of labour is borne by the father, who is rewarded for his efforts by the comfort of his family. But in the working-class home, this proper order has been overthrown. Rather than the father enduring labour so as to preserve the security of the home for himself and his family, it is the child who must do so, rendering the mother's duty of "care" and "comfort" useless, a hollow mockery of the ideal family relationship.

The damage caused to the poor family's relationship is the result, Norton argues, of a struggle between two defining qualities of England: that of its "happy homes" which "have been / A source of triumph, and a theme for song" (XXXII. 1-2) and of "Merchant England's prosperous trade" (XXXIII. 3). Although the middle-class home she describes suggests that a balance can be struck between the two so long as commerce and labour do not infiltrate the familial hearth, Norton argues that in the homes of the poor, the Merchants of England have taken advantage of necessity, and, as a result, have initiated the contamination of the poor home: "Do not your hearts inquire / Who tempts the parents' penury? They yearn / Toward their offspring with a strong desire, / But those who starve *will* sell, even what they most require" (XX. 6-9). The homes of the poor, Norton suggests, have seen the displacement of the parents' natural love for their children by the harsh demands of the market. Although the parents feel a "strong desire" for their children, they must also "sell" them, in order to stave off starvation. Though, Norton submits, these children have an inherent emotional value – they are what their parents "yearn" for, what "they most require" – this value is superceded, because of the family's "penury," by the children's material worth. Furthermore, though "in the British senate men rise up" (XVI. 1) to proclaim that "By *some* employ the poor man's child must earn / Its daily bread" (XX. 2-3), Norton, by focusing upon the child's inability to eat (XLIX. 7), demonstrates that the child's labour is not providing for his own maintenance, but is, in fact, consuming him, while only providing "frugal fare" (6) for his family. That which makes the homes of England a point of pride – the familial bonds of love and affection described in Norton's depiction of the middle-class home – is therefore destroyed by the reality of starvation and by the "commercial avarice" (XXIII. 6) of the nation.

Although Norton suggests that the children and families of the poor are damaged by the influence of commerce in the home, she does not question the presence of love and affection in those homes, an attitude shared by Frances Trollope in *The Life and History of Michael Armstrong, the Factory Boy* (1840). Michael is sent out to work by his mother in order to support her and his frail brother, but Trollope makes it clear that such a decision is not the result of choice, but of necessity. The mother's "patient suffering" (39) and the family's "extreme poverty" (39) make Michael willing to undertake any labour on their behalf, and his work, though exploitative, is therefore also a sign of his filial duty and affection. He asks "How will you get on without me? ... I am sure Teddy can't make your bed as I do – he hasn't the strength in his arms. And who's to fetch water?" (39). Because it is motivated by love and duty, Michael's willingness to labour within and without the home in order to support his family is presented as natural and right; instead, it is his employer's willingness to take advantage of both his family's need and Michael's own desire to be of use to them that is the cause of the family's suffering.

The influence of greed and avarice makes men such as Sir Matthew Dowling (the factory owner) and his overseer, Mr. Parsons, unable to recognize the inherent value of children, seeing them only as commodities, but the parents of the children themselves, in Trollope's text, do not make the same mistake. When speaking to a poor woman in the process of beating her child about the value of sending children to work in the factories, Mr. Parsons suggests, "And isn't it a comfort now, Mrs. Miller, to get rid of the plague of 'em?" (36). Her response demonstrates the extent to which the overseer has overestimated her compliance with his point of view: "The woman ceased to shake her little boy, and looking for a moment at the clear blue eyes, that, notwithstanding her rough discipline, were very lovingly turned up to her face – something like a shudder passed through her" (36). Here, Trollope refuses to sentimentalize poor families, but also refuses to suggest that they share less affection for their offspring than do their wealthier neighbours. This woman might treat her child roughly, but she cannot bear to be parted from him, and cannot see him either as a "plague" of which to be rid, or as a commodity to be sold.

Although writers such as Norton and Trollope were willing to place the blame for the poor child's suffering not at the feet of its parents, but of the nation's merchants and

their employees (such as the overseer), other writers explored the possibility that the poor family itself could be infected with avarice, and, as a result, be willing participants in their children's suffering. In *Helen Fleetwood* (1839-40), for example, Charlotte Elizabeth Tonna tells the story of the Widow Green, her four grandchildren and adopted grandchild, Helen, and their migration from their happy, but impoverished rural home to Manchester. Lured by the promise of lucrative employment in the factories, this family is severed from its parish ties, a move that, Tonna makes clear, adds to the family's vulnerability. The bonds of religion and duty that hold the family together are further weakened, upon the family's arrival in Manchester, by the separation of the children from the moral and spiritual influence of the grandmother, because they are put to work in the factories among those who do not share their strong Christian faith. Though the Widow Green does what she can to care for the children, both physically and spiritually, she is unable to combat the influence of the factories in which the children spend most of their time, and must watch helplessly while the children give in to alcoholism (288), lose their faith (320), and become hardened (422).

Tonna clearly demonstrates the destruction factory work wreaks upon this family despite the virtues of the family itself, but she also carefully observes the ways in which poor families themselves contribute to the ruin of their children. The Widow Green's daughter, with whom the family stays upon their arrival in Manchester, is one such example of an avaricious parent. Though the Widow Green and her grandchildren are entrapped by the factory system through necessity, her daughter, Mrs. Wright, is moved by a kind of greed, visible in the conspicuous consumption in her dwelling. Though it is filthy, "yet a struggle to look fine was manifest throughout the whole establishment" (49), as evidenced by a "number of the most tawdry prints, evidently quite fresh, and placed there for particular display" (49), and by Mrs. Wright herself, who "though she had not combed out her matted locks, had surmounted them with a cap of unusual form, decorated with showy ribands" (49). This showy but filthy dwelling is contrasted with the "beloved cottage" (12) in the country in which the Widow Green had been "a wise and faithful steward" (9), and for which all the children had laboured to support. That poor home had been, nevertheless, a true home, in comparison to Mrs. Wright's dwelling,

in which "Of ornaments there was no lack … of neatness, comfort, respectability, nothing relieved the eye" (49).

The description of Mrs. Wright's home and person taps into common nineteenth-century fears about factory employment. Unlike domestic servants, who fell under the influence of their masters and mistresses, and unlike the rural working class, equally supervised by the local gentry, factory workers enjoyed a relevant independence. As Dorice Williams Elliot observes in "Servants and Hands: Representing the Working Classes in Victorian Factory Novels," "Factory workers … were supposedly ruled only by what Carlyle called the 'cash nexus'" (381). As a result,

> While they endured killing hours and were treated like machines while at work, whatever leisure hours they had were unsupervised and their dress, recreation, and personal relationships were left to their own discretion. In other words, although industrialism exploited workers and caused many of them immense suffering, it also gave them a frightening new kind of freedom. (381)

Divorced from the influence of their "betters," those members of the working class who were supported by factory labour could make their own choices as to how they should comport themselves and order their homes. In her description of Mrs. Wright, Tonna suggests that, without the paternalistic influence of the middle and upper classes, these choices will be influenced solely by materialism. Rather than live in respectable poverty and run a proper household, Mrs. Wright instead seeks to ape the upper classes through her displays of "tawdry" finery.

But perhaps more importantly, Mrs. Wright's failure to create a proper home reflects a similar failure to care for her family. For what is most disconcerting about Mrs. Wright's dwelling is that its scanty material ornaments have been purchased through the labour of her own children, and Tonna's description of the eldest daughter, Sarah, reveals the price paid by this family for the precarious material wealth they enjoy: "it was already apparent to all, that poor Sarah had only one arm, and that one so contracted as to be nearly useless; while her feet were bent in, until she rested on the ankle-bones. 'You see,' said her mother, 'what an object she is. The arm was lost by an accident, and all the rest came from convulsions and fits'" (75). Broken, contracted, and "useless," Sarah's body

is a visible sign of the factory system's consumption of children; she has been used to provide her family with cheap, material luxuries, but once used and thrown away, she becomes merely an "object," and, as such, of no value. The treatment of Sarah by the Widow Green and her grandchildren, by contrast, demonstrates how such a child should actually be valued: she is cared for, loved, and perhaps most importantly, "saved" through the religious instruction of her cousins.

Although Mrs. Wright is an entirely unsympathetic character, Tonna suggests that where monetary interest is allowed to overturn proper familial relationships, such a failure to recognize the affective and spiritual value of a child will not be uncommon. Tom South, a friend of the family whose own children work in the factories, acknowledges, unlike Mrs. Wright, the evils of factory employment, and argues that "it's a cannibal sort of life to be eating, as one may say, the flesh off our children's bones, and sucking the young blood out of their veins" (85-86). The use of the term "cannibal" to describe the parent's relation to his or her child captures not only the fact that these children are consumed by their labour so that others might be fed, but also that such an arrangement breaks a kind of taboo – that it goes against a natural, proper order and, as such, threatens society itself. It is a taboo, however, that even those as aware of its evils as Tom South are willing to break for the sake of monetary gain. When told of the death of Tom South's daughter, who died as a result of overwork after taking on extra shifts, the Widow assigns blame to the parent as well as to the employer:

> Here was first a lure spread before her by the mill-owner in the shape of additional wages, for which to barter her very life; then most culpable encouragement given by the act of the parents in allowing her to appropriate extra earnings, while they pocketed the fruit of her day-labour – actual encouragement that rendered void whatever they might *say* against the proceeding. (202)

Tom South, moved by concern for her health, spoke out against his daughter's extra work, but his acceptance of her decision, and more damningly, of her wages, "rendered void" both his concern *and* his authority. Although he complains to the Widow Green that "Disobedience to parents is one of the first lessons learned in the mills" (201), suggesting again that factory labour infects its workers with an unseemly independence,

it is also his own interest in the "fruit of [his daughter's] day-labour" that overturns the rule of authority in his home. His daughter's betrayal of filial duty, her failure to obey, is connected to his betrayal of his parental duty through his failure to protect and care for his child.

Although Carlyle's cannibalistic parents represent the dangers that must ensue when the familial relationship is replaced, by necessity, with a "committee of ways and means" (4), Tonna's comparison of the actions of the Widow Green, who never fails to work to relieve her grandchildren's distress, with those of Tom South and Mrs. Wright, suggests that greed is as much a factor in the destruction of the poor family as is necessity. And worse even than the family that becomes a "committee" as a result of starvation, or the family that is disrupted by the removal of the children from the home, is the family that operates within the confines of the factory itself. In those cases where fathers and elder brothers are also employed in the mills, Tonna argues, tyranny will soon replace duty:

> They are themselves paid by the piece, and consequently it becomes their interest to have the given work completed in the shortest possible time; and if they have young daughters, or little sisters, they of course save or rather gain considerably by employing them: and it is an awful fact, that under the hardening influence of covetousness, or the cravings of wretched want, more barbarous usage awaits the girl at the hand of a father or brother than that of a stranger. No tyranny is so dreadful as domestic tyranny: and he who sacrifices natural affection at the shrine of mammon, becomes a monster among God's works. (249)

In the opposition she constructs between "interest" and "natural affection," Tonna argues that the two cannot co-exist: where the familial relationship is infected by the demands of "covetousness" or even "want," love and duty will cease to hold sway. Whereas Trollope was able to recognize, in her depiction of Michael's labour on behalf of his family, that labour and love are not necessarily antithetical, and may even be, particularly within the homes of the poor, related enterprises, Tonna suggests that factory labour, at least, will always destroy the family. Even the Widow Green, who never fails to care for and love her grandchildren, does fail to save them, and, with the exception of the saintly Helen and

the equally virtuous James (both of whom are dead by the novel's end), to meet with respect and love from them. When the home is infected by factory labour, love and affection will be displaced, and when the factory itself replaces the domestic space, the "home" becomes the site of "hardening" influences, rather than a place of refuge.

In their examination of the effects of factory labour on poor families, these writers therefore express concern about the imposition of the values and concerns of a market economy onto a space that should presumably be ordered by bonds of duty, affection, and responsibility. As such, they address the problem of reconciling England's two defining virtues: that of England as a nation filled with happy, idyllic homes, and that of England as a nation of prosperous merchants and commercial endeavour. A balance between these two attributes can only be achieved, these texts suggest, through a clear separation between the domestic and the economic spaces. As such, these texts can be read as seeking to impose upon working-class families the same separation of the spheres so valued in the middle-class world. The assumption that children, and, in fact, women,[3] were inherently damaged by factory work, and with them, the heart and soul of the family itself, suggests that to preserve the working-class family, the paid labour of both women and children must be restricted.[4]

By focusing upon the effects of commerce upon familial relationships, however, these writers effectively subsume the problem of necessity and starvation within a discourse of domestic ideology. That is, by centering their critique of child labour upon the ways in which such labour contaminates or overthrows feelings of duty or affection as a result of the child's separation from the domestic sphere, these writers displace issues of economic imbalance with issues of domestic and familial imbalance. As such, their texts show similarities to the work of early sociologists such as James Kay Shuttleworth, who, according to Nancy Armstrong in *Desire and Domestic Fiction*, "enclosed a problem of class relations and national proportions within a discrete space divided by streets, homes, and bedrooms" (172). While for Armstrong, this work by early sociologists "translated a political scandal into a sexual one" (172), I would argue that in literary representations of endangered children in the factories such as those discussed here, the political scandal is transformed into a domestic scandal. Political and economic tyranny is replaced by domestic tyranny, and the tragedy of the home takes precedence

over the tragedy of mass starvation, dehumanizing labour, and family displacement caused the by the industrialization of England.

Furthermore, in its focus on the child as a subject of concern, anti-child labour discourse successfully transformed "the dangerous hungers of powerful adults into the blameless and pitiable needs of infants" (Berry 10). The appeal of the child labourer, as opposed to the potentially violent adult labourer is made patently obvious in Trollope's Preface to *Michael Armstrong*. She acknowledges her earlier proposal to write a second part to Michael's story, in which "the hero of her tale, having lived through his toil-worn boyhood, should have been seen embarked in those perfectly constitutional struggles for the amelioration of the sufferings of his class" (iii). As a result, however, of "scenes of outrage and lawless violence" perpetrated by England's workers, Trollope "determined that the existence of her hero as an operative shall close with his childhood" because "No misconstruction of principles, no misconception of motives can exist with regard to an attempt to ameliorate the lot of infant labourers" (iv). Separating domestic concerns from national ones, and infant labourers from adult (male) ones, writers such as Norton, Trollope, and Tonna proposed the abolition of child labour as the solution to the ills they describe – a solution that did not address the problem of necessity, and that failed to recognize the very different expectations and understanding of home and childhood within the working classes.

"Hope and Ventures": Ambition and Endangered Childhood in Representations of the Middle-Class Home

I would argue, however, that the anxieties these writers express about the lack of separation between home and factory, between familial affection and commercial "interest," does reveal an awareness on their part of the extent to which the comforts enjoyed in many middle-class homes, and the luxury of those homes' own separation from non-domestic labour, was dependent on the suffering of working-class families. As Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall observe in *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class, 1780-1850*, "The overriding objective of pursuing a moral and genteel life made it almost impossible for employers to acknowledge the price paid by their employees and displaced craft workers under capitalist industrial expansion" (196).

Although Davidoff and Hall suggest that "the romantic vision" (27)[5] allowed the middle classes to bridge the contradiction between "on the one hand, the disruption and squalor caused by manufacture and urban development which were the bread and butter of the middle class and, on the other, the intense desire for order and moral superiority" (27), the concerns expressed by Norton, Trollope, and Tonna suggest that "romantic vision" was not sufficient to erase feelings of communal responsibility for the suffering of working-class families.

Furthermore, in their depictions of middle-class families who depend upon the exploitation of working-class families, writers such as Trollope and Tonna suggest that this exploitation cannot fail to harden the factory owners themselves, and thus cause damage to their own homes and families. In *Michael Armstrong*, Trollope describes Sir Matthew Dowling's children as possessing hearts "seared and hardened by the ceaseless operation of opulent self-indulgence" (53). These children have been raised to believe "that not only was it agreeable to enjoy and cherish all good things which wealth can produce, but that it was their bounden and special duty to make it visible before the eyes of all the men that they could" (53). Because this family's concept of "duty" is simply that of making a spectacle of themselves, and of the material wealth purchased by the suffering of child labourers, they obviously do not represent "the right kind of domestic values" (Elliot 384), "dedicated" as they are "only to dressing well and aping the aristocracy" (384). And if it is evident from this and other descriptions that Sir Matthew's children have been ruined (in the development of their better natures, at least) by their family's immense wealth, his daughter Martha illustrates the pain that can be caused to a loving child through an awareness of the cruelties exercised by her father. Martha, unlike her siblings, "contained the only spark of refinement of which the Dowling family could boast" (Trollope 53), and possessing this "spark of refinement," Martha is pained and horrified to witness her father's cruel treatment of Michael Armstrong (110-11).

A similar moment occurs in Tonna's *Helen Fleetwood*. The Widow Green's efforts to ensure proper treatment of the saintly Helen in the mills of Mr. Z. leads her to appeal to him in his home. While Mr. Z. responds only with anger to the widow's concerns, his daughter is moved by them:

> During her appeal for Helen, whose orphan state she briefly, but touchingly described, the young lady frequently suspended the operations of her pencil, and listened with looks of kind commiseration: Mr. Z. was silent, and a gloomy expression gathered on his features, which might, however, result from dissatisfaction at hearing of his people's malpractices. At length, he glanced towards his daughter, and catching one of her compassionate looks directed to the speaker, he abruptly exclaimed, 'Amelia, go to your sisters.' (182)

Though Amelia, like Martha Dowling, is blessed with kindness and consideration, such kindness becomes distressing to the father when it is aroused by those who labour for him. She is an ideal daughter, as shown by her compassion, but it is the very fact of her ideal nature that causes her father's discomfort, and as a result, the manufacture that supports this family's home is antithetical to the domestic virtues found within it.

Concerns about the infiltration of market interests into the working-class family and home can therefore be understood as intimately connected to similar concerns about the middle-class home. Although it was true that the ideology of the "separate spheres" was crucial for the dominance of conceptions of childhood dependence and of distinct gender roles in middle-class families, it was also true that, for many in the middle class, business was a family affair. According to Davidoff and Hall, the middle class was characterized by the "interpenetration of family and production" (196), because trade relationships, partnerships, and economic connections were negotiated through the "ties of kinship, friendship, and business" (217). Familial relationships were often, therefore, business relationships, and Davidoff and Hall observe that

> Nowhere were the ties of kinship, friendship and business more evident than in the way partnership functioned. By far the most common form of partnership was father and son(s), brothers, uncle and nephew. Sisters married their brothers' partners and sisters' husbands often became partners after marriage thus binding two families into the fortunes of the enterprise. (217-18)

This connection between "family and fortune" meant that, in the middle-class home, the affective domain was always entangled with the economic: marriage was both an

"economic and social building block for the middle class" (322) and a spiritual and emotional relationship; children were both treasured members of the family and the future of the family's business endeavours. Though the ideology of the separate spheres suggested that home and business should always remain apart, therefore, such an ideology was constructed upon a social edifice in which the two were entirely interdependent.

This interdependence of home and business is evident in texts such as Dickens's *Nicholas Nickleby*, in which "Families in the book – the Mantalinis, the Cheerybles, the Crummleses, the Squeerses, the Nicklebys – are also family businesses, where the claims of the domestic and the economic are intimately bound together" (Bowen 154). This conflation of economic and affective interests is particularly evident in representations of marriage in the novel. For example, Kate Nickleby's desire to support her family and to find love and affection are shown to be mutually supportive. After the death of their father, Kate and Nicholas Nickleby, along with their mother, are thrown upon the care of their father's brother, Ralph Nickleby. While Mr. Nickleby finds employment for Nicholas in the odious Dotheboy's Hall, Kate finds herself unable – due to her exceptional loveliness and the jealousies it arouses – to keep her employment at Mrs. Mantalini's dress-making business. However, her uncle invites her to "keep house" for him at a dinner he is holding for his business associates, an invitation that fills both Kate and her mother with hope. Her mother declares that "Your uncle has taken a strong fancy to you, that's quite clear; and if some extraordinary fortune doesn't come to you, after this, I shall be surprised, that's all" (210). The connection between her uncle's perceived affection for Kate – his "fancy" – and her hopes for financial security – "good fortune" – demonstrates the extent to which, for both Kate and her mother, the idea of love and economic advancement go hand in hand:

> With this [the mother] launched into sundry anecdotes of young ladies, who had had thousand pound notes given them in reticules by eccentric uncles; and of young ladies who had accidentally met amiable gentlemen of enormous wealth at their uncles' houses, and married them, after short but ardent courtships; and Kate, listening first in apathy, and afterwards in amusement, felt, as they walked home, something of her mother's

> sanguine complexion gradually awakening in her own bosom, and began to think that her prospects might be brightening, and that better days might be dawning upon them. (210-11)

For Kate and her mother, the prospect of marriage is imbued with both romance and financial security for the family; that a gentleman who is "amiable and ardent" and also "of enormous wealth" will be moved by Kate's beauty is a "prospect" that could substantially alter the fortunes of the family. For Kate, therefore, the career of marriage holds the possibility of serving both her emotional and her economic needs, as well as those of her family.

Although this balance between the affective and the economic domains sought by Kate and her mother is depicted as both natural and right, the uncle himself shows no such balance, for it becomes evident that, for him, his niece is important only insofar as she serves his own business interests. Kate is the only lady present at the dinner held by her uncle, and while there, she is subjected to the advances and insults of the libertines her uncle hopes to ensnare through usury. As a result of her uncle's selfish employment of her, Kate is exposed not to the appropriate advances of courtship and possible marriage, but to a kind of prostitution, as the men very inappropriately vie for her attentions and even make her the subject of a bet (216-18). After she is violently accosted by Sir Mulberry Hawk (219), her uncle intervenes, much to Mulberry's anger. Mulberry realizes that Kate has been set as bait, not for him, but for the idiotic Lord Verisopht: "You would sell your flesh and blood for money; yourself, if you have not already made a bargain with the devil .... Do you mean to tell me that your pretty niece was not brought here as a decoy for the drunken boy downstairs?" (220). In his acknowledgement that he brought his niece to the supper "as a matter of business" (220), Mr. Nickleby reveals his failure to respect the duty he owes his niece: the duty to provide for his "flesh and blood" (a duty recognized even by the vicious Sir Mulberry). Instead, Mr. Nickleby chooses to "sell" his niece, violating, as his niece declares, "the memory of one you must have loved in some old time" (221).

Kate's appeal to her uncle's "love" for his dead brother, her father, is extremely important, because it is "love" that allows for the proper negotiation between business and familial interests, and that should inspire her uncle to protect her interests rather than

use her in the service of his own. Later in the novel, after Kate has been forced to endure the continued attentions of Sir Mulberry, her appeal to her uncle makes it clear that she is urging the primacy of an affective relationship over the demands of economic interest: " I have come at last to you, the only friend I have at hand – almost the only friend I have at all – to entreat and implore you to assist me" (331). Her appellation of Ralph Nickleby as "friend" has a double connotation – it suggests an appeal to affection, but also to protection, a role which, Ralph Nickleby, as her uncle, should willingly undertake. His response, however, that he cannot take her part because he and Sir Mulberry "are connected in business" (332), demonstrates that, for him, the demands of business interests far outweigh the responsibility he bears as her uncle. Kate is endangered, therefore, by the displacement of duty and affection, in this familial relationship, with avarice and ambition.

Dickens also demonstrates, however, through his depiction of Madeline Bray and her father, the ways in which duty and affection can be manipulated in order to serve economic gains. Her selfish, spendthrift father agrees to Madeline's marriage to the aged and repugnant Arthur Gride as a means of buying his "independence" from both penury and the charity of the Cheeryble brothers. Nicholas, who is aware of the nefarious plans behind the marriage,[6] attempts to dissuade Miss Bray by telling her that "You are betrayed and sold for money" (618), but her reply – "You say you have a duty to discharge … and so have I. And with the help of Heaven I will perform it" (618) – suggests that her duty as a daughter requires her to consent, even to a marriage she knows to be wrong. But Nicholas's appeal to Madeline is, tellingly, based on the importance of love to a marital relationship:

> Reflect, reflect, before it is too late, on the mockery of plighting to him at the altar, faith in which your heart can have no share – of uttering solemn words, against which nature and reason must rebel – of the degradation of yourself in your own esteem, which must ensue, and must be aggravated every day, as his detested character opens upon you more and more. Shrink from the loathsome companionship of this wretch as you would from corruption and disease. (618-19)

Though Madeline's devotion to her father is depicted as both right and admirable, and in keeping with the patient air of self-sacrifice that makes Nicholas love her, her willingness to follow her father's wishes even so far as to marry where she does not love is shown to be a grave error, particularly when contrasted with Kate's courageous and righteous defiance of her uncle in support of her own right to be free from the marriage proposals of Sir Mulberry. Because it is the presence of love alone that distinguishes a proper marriage from a kind of prostitution, from the "degradation" and "corruption" of a spousal relationship based purely upon avarice and greed, Madeline's acquiescence to a loveless marriage, though motivated by duty, could only contribute to her father's further degradation and her own future unhappiness.

Although Mr. Bray's and Ralph Nickleby's manipulations of Madeline and Kate are exemplary of the dangers to girl-children that occur when avarice, greed, and ambition replace the duty to protect, the Cheeryble brothers serve to demonstrate the positive aspects of the interpenetration of business and family. Though unrelated to either the Nicklebys or Madeline Bray, the Cheeryble brothers nevertheless assume responsibility for both. Their relationship to these separate families is ostensibly a business one, because Nicholas is employed by them and they provide charity to Madeline under the pretense of "purchasing her little drawings and ornamental work at a high price, and keeping up a constant demand for the same" (533). But where Madeline's father fails to care for her, the Cheeryble brothers find the means to provide that care, and where Ralph Nickleby fails to provide support and protection for his niece and nephew, the Cheeryble brothers vow to do just that: "They shall not hurt a hair of your head, or the boy's head, or your mother's head, or your sister's head .... We have all said it, and we'll all do it" (529). Through their machinations and influence, Madeline is married to Nicholas, and Kate is married to the Cheeryble's nephew, Frank, thus making what had been, initially, a business association a family association through marriage. When family ties are abused in the aims of commerce, Dickens suggests, duty no longer has any meaning, but when business is informed by and tempered with affection, duty, generosity, and mutual benefit, commercial partnerships have the potential to represent the ideal family. The presence of love and affection in a relationship is therefore shown to be crucial to the concept of family, replacing even blood ties in importance. Without

proper feelings of duty and affection, family bonds are at risk of serving only commercial interest, replacing care with tyranny, and duty with avarice.

In homes where such a displacement of proper feeling has taken place, even the wealthy child is represented as being vulnerable to exploitation and endangerment. They might not be threatened by starvation, but the emotional neglect suffered by both Flora and Paul Dombey in Dickens's *Dombey and Son* (1848) is, nevertheless, presented as both physically and emotionally damaging. Flora and Paul are endangered as a result of their father's failure to distinguish between the commercial "house" of Dombey and Son and the home in which he raises his children. For Mr. Dombey, parenthood contains only the "hope of giving birth to a new partner" (50) and the "perpetuation of the family" business (51), and childhood, in keeping with his own experience of it, only the promise of one day succeeding to the business: "He had risen, as his father had before him, in the course of life and death, from Son to Dombey" (50). His daughter, because she will play no role in the patriarchal family enterprise, is to him almost non-existent; before the birth of his son, Dombey understood his marriage as having had "no issue": "To speak of; none worth mentioning. There had been a girl some six years before .... But what was a girl to Dombey and Son! In the capital of the House's name and dignity, such a child was merely a piece of base coin that couldn't be invested – a bad Boy – nothing more" (51). The diction of this passage – "capital," "coin," and "invested" – forcefully speaks to the predominance of economic concerns in the Dombey family, demonstrating the extent to which Dombey's children are reduced to commodities, who represent either good currency that will produce returns, or bad currency that cannot "be invested."

Dombey's emotional neglect of Flora, particularly after his son's death, is extraordinarily painful to her, and her situation in the home is perceived by those around her to be worse than that of an orphan, for as one character observes, "not an orphan in the wide world can be so deserted as the child who is an outcast from a living parent's love" (423). Dombey's behaviour towards his daughter is depicted as both unfeeling and unnatural, but if it causes grief and sorrow to Flora, it also, Dickens suggests, does harm to Dombey himself. Flora's "one absorbing wish" is "to be allowed to show him some affection, to be a consolation to him, to win him over to the endurance of some tenderness from her, his solitary child" (320). But in response, Dombey perceives her

only as "an aggravation of his bitterness": "Her loving and innocent face rising before him, had no softening or winning influence. He rejected the angel, and took up with the tormenting spirit crouching in his bosom. Her patience, goodness, youth, devotion, love, were as so many atoms in the ashes upon which he set his heel" (356).

Flora's "patience, goodness, youth, devotion" and "love" all speak to the affective capital of the girl-child in the nineteenth century. As Catherine Robson observes in *Men in Wonderland: The Lost Girlhood of Victorian Gentleman*, "it is precisely in her role as affective center of the home that the daughter is of the greatest service to the men of her family" (53). The girl-child "clearly represents the home as a realm of emotion worlds away from the maelstrom of competitive commerce" (53), thus providing a refuge for her father, in which his better self can be restored through the action of love and affection. Moreover, because Victorian childhood was "feminized" as a "time of 'softness,' and 'vulnerability,' requiring 'gentleness' and 'protection'" (4), the girl-child also served as a memorial of her father's own childhood, thus providing him with a two-fold retreat from the world of commerce and from the world of adulthood. The very thing that makes Flora worthless to her father – her separation from the world of commerce – is, in fact, the very thing that should make most her precious to him. Because Dombey understands his family only in terms of business, however, and his daughter only in the light of commercial, rather than emotional "investment," he deprives himself of the humanizing influence the child could bestow upon him. In the "House" of Dombey and Son, Flora can be nothing but a "Bad boy," because the role she is most suited for – the center of a home, rather than a "House" – does not, effectively, exist.

Although Flora's childhood suffering is the result of her lack of worth in her father's unbalanced domestic economy, little Paul Dombey is endangered by virtue of his ultimate value within it. Unlike his sister, Paul is expected to "accomplish a destiny" (52), a destiny that shapes his father's interactions with him even from the moment of his birth. After his mother's death in childbirth, Paul is put in the care of a wetnurse, whose dealings with him are strictly controlled by a rhetoric of economic exchange. As Dombey explains to Mrs. Toodles, "When you go away from here, you will have concluded what is a mere matter of bargain and sale, hiring and letting: and will stay away. The child will cease to remember you; and you will cease, if you please, to

remember the child" (68). Through his insistence upon the commercial nature of Mrs. Toodles's interactions with his infant son, Dombey seeks to prevent any emotional attachment, any feelings of affection that would allow her to insinuate herself into the "business" of the family. Mrs. Toodles is not to imagine herself playing the role of mother to Paul; instead, she is "literally food for the rich" (Berry 74).

Dombey's treatment of Mrs. Toodles suggests that the narrative of cannibalism present in both Carlyle's and Tonna's texts is here displaced from the familial to the social – in that it is the wealthy cannibalizing the lower classes, rather than the parent cannibalizing the child – but it becomes evident that Paul himself is consumed by his father's ambition. Though he is sickly throughout his early childhood (particularly after the dismissal of his nurse), Paul awakens no anxiety in his father, who feels only "Impatience for the time to come, when his visions of their united consequence and grandeur would be triumphantly realized" (150). Dombey's focus upon Paul's future worth, which blinds him to the child's precarious physical condition, also blinds him to the child's emotional needs, since Dombey succeeds, after the dismissal of Mrs. Toodles, in finding caregivers who restrict their relationship to mere "hopes and ventures," "plans and speculations" (148). Caring as they do only for the ways in which Paul will benefit them financially, these caregivers fail to see the child's increasing illness. Separated from the love of his sister and from the comforts of a true home, Paul feels "an aching void in his young heart," "as if he had taken life unfurnished, and the upholsterer were never coming" (215). His father's ambition can purchase nourishment, caregivers, and an education for his child, but it cannot provide a home, and it is this absence of a home, captured in the metaphor likening Paul's aching heart to an unfurnished dwelling, that causes the child's weakness, sickness, and eventual death.

Paul's death means the end of the company's prospects, suggesting that both the child and the business are destroyed by the absence of a proper home. Dickens's portrayal of the fall of Dombey and Son, brought about by a the lack of a domestic space in which his child would have received both physical and emotional nourishment, makes the connections between a healthy, thriving home and a healthy, thriving business apparent. Dombey's investment in his business is not, therefore, the primary problem of this text; instead, it is his failure to recognize the interdependence of both home and

business. The paradox of the text is that it is only in making the home a separate sphere, one in which affective investments take precedence over financial considerations, that the symbiotic relationship between "House" and home can be maintained.

There are similarities in representations of children as victims of commerce in depictions of working-class and of middle-class homes. In all these texts, an argument is being made for the inherent value of children, for a recognition of their ultimate worth outside systems of economic exchange. Michael Armstrong, Helen Fleetwood, Madeline Bray, and Flora Dombey all have gifts of love, affection, duty, innocence, and virtue to bestow upon their caregivers, gifts that should far outweigh these children's value as commodities, labourers, or financial investments. Furthermore, the gifts they possess are ones more naturally suited (in terms of domestic ideology) to the home, and to the kind of affective (unpaid) labour that makes the home a refuge from the harsh, material, outside world. What differs between the situations of working-class and middle-class children in these texts, however, is the relationship between economic and affective endeavours. Though it might be imperative for Kate Nickleby, for example, to make a proper marriage in order to ensure her financial security, all that is required to bring such an arrangement about is for her uncle to assume responsibility for her. Furthermore, the wealth she can acquire through marriage, and the fortunes she can bring to her family as a result of it, can be achieved through an arrangement that preserves her place within the domestic sphere, a place that reconciles both her affective and her economic worth. Questions of economics become subsumed, in depictions of marriages such as Kate's, in a rhetoric of affect, thus making her value as a commodity effectively invisible. For children who work in the factories, however, such as young Mary Green in Tonna's *Helen Fleetwood*, who is hardened by her labour, economic work and affective work cannot be reconciled. Only when business and family are intertwined, as in the case of middle-class homes, and only when a business relationship is balanced with proper feelings of duty, care, and responsibility, as in the case of the Cheerybles, will children be protected from the harmful effects of commercial and financial interest. But where economic necessity removes the child from the protective space of the home, and where the child's economic worth is visible *as* economic worth, love and duty alone are represented as insufficient to ensure the child's well-being.

Commerce and Child Abuse

The focus upon the child as a victim of commerce evident in these novels speaks to the increasingly dominant belief that children who worked outside the domestic space were perceived to be undertaking "adult" responsibilities, and by the end of the nineteenth century, any child "whose knowledge and responsibility were 'adult' needed rescue" (Davin 4-5). It is not surprising, therefore, that NSPCC rhetoric echoes many of the same concerns – about the child as commodity, about parental abuse of the child for the sake of financial gain, and about the "cannibalism" that allowed the parent to live off the child's labour – found within these literary texts. What I will suggest, however, is that the NSPCC's construction of child abuse as a classless crime, one connected to individual pathology rather than economic or social factors, meant that the Society's understanding of children as victims of commerce was particularly influenced by representations, such as those of Dickens's texts, that linked such endangerment to a parent's or guardian's avarice. That is, novelistic representations of endangered childhood, as I have argued, allowed for an understanding of cruelty and abuse that centered on, for lack of a better term, crimes of feeling. Parents or guardians such as Ralph Nickleby cause harm to the children in their care because they fail to feel the proper feeling, and because they cause pain and sadness to these children as a result. Such a failing on the part of Ralph Nickleby may speak to a larger social ill – such as the hypocrisy of the middle classes, or the injustice faced by children within Victorian society – but it is, nevertheless, his own failing, his own sin for which he must make reparation. The ability of the Victorian novel to recast social problems as domestic problems, to find both the solution and the blame for social ills within the private space of the home and the inner heart of the individual, finds its way, I would argue, into the late-nineteenth century social-scientific narratives of the NSPCC. For in the NSPCC's stories of children as victims of commerce, such a victimization is always realized on the level of the individual. That is, where children were abused as a result of either their value, or their involvement, within economic systems, the NSPCC locates the root cause of this abuse in the abusive parents' failure to feel the proper feeling for their children, rather than in their family's necessity.

According to Waugh, financial concerns threatened children in a variety of ways: in the continued employment of children in theatrical work, as discussed in Chapter Two; in the failure of the wealthy families of England to provide support to organizations such as the NSPCC; in the neglect of children that must inevitably occur when the "commercial condition" of England was in disarray ("Notes" CG 7:11, 149); and even in "homes" where children were put to work in order to support the institution itself" ("Notes" CG 8.5, 66). Where children suffered, financial considerations were often to blame, even, Waugh argued, in the London SPCC's battle to bring about new legislation. In July 1889, the bill before Parliament that would eventually become the "Children's Charter" faced severe opposition on two counts – on its double restriction of the employment of children in theatres, and on children trading in the streets – which some members of Parliament felt would represent "a perfectly unnecessary influence with freedom of trade" (qtd. in Behlmer 103). Waugh's response to these critics was that their motivation "is not Christian. It is not English. It would be unfair to Paganism to say it was Pagan. It is perhaps commercial" ("Notes" CG 3:31, 124).

Waugh's designation of commercial interest as "not English" would seem to suggest that he understood Englishness, and in particular, the proper English home, to be antithetical to the concerns of business and trade. His acknowledgement, however, in an editorial on "The Dawn of Justice to Little Children" in January 1889, that "We are a commercial people" (125), suggests instead that, for Waugh, "commercial" is a shifty signifier. When it was used to define financial activities that, in one form or another, threaten children, "commercial" designates greed, avarice, ambition, and misplaced priorities. In the second instance, however, it signifies a recognized and even, perhaps, respected aspect of English life that is not, in itself, evil. As long as English people "draw the line somewhere" (125), Waugh argued, commercial and social considerations can happily (and prosperously) co-exist. Because Waugh and the Society understood the negative effects of commerce upon the lives of children to be the result of individual, rather than systemic problems, commerce itself was not constructed as an evil force threatening children. For example, in his article on "Cruelty to the High Born," Waugh cautions that

> Long flowing hair combed and crisped, and elegant dress of children, may conceal fatal constitutional mischiefs being deliberately wrought by those who have the custody of the little wearers. If disease will but play its part, monies left to them by a father's will, or coming through a dead mother's marriage settlement, will fall into their guardians' hands. (131)

These children might be threatened by their value within an economic system, by the promise of "monies left to them," but there is no implication here that inheritance itself is a serious social evil. Instead, as in Dickens's novels, it is the failure of these children's "guardians" to truly undertake that role, to "guard" and protect the children in their charge, that endangers these children, making "Wills and settlements made all honestly enough years ago … a bonus on what is nothing less than child-murder" (131). The interconnectedness of family and finance, of children and "monies," is understood to be "honest" enough, in and of itself, so long as avarice does not replace affection in the relationship of the guardian to the child.

This focus on the individual, moral failings of parents and guardians in the middle- and upper-class home made greed the operative motivation, according to Waugh, in the abuse of children as victims of commerce, a motivation that Waugh ascribed equally to the lower classes. While the wealthy child's economic value – in the form of wills and settlements – was "honest enough," however, child labour that supported working-class homes was depicted as nothing less than unnatural. In his 1891 article in *The Child's Guardian* on "Cannibalism in England," Waugh argues that "From infancy to death it is not possible for any of us to escape the need of something to eat. Life-long the doom of nothing to eat is death, which is first averted by our hunger being supplied by our parents, and in the course of time by our own labour" (9). While these are, he posits, the "general conditions of child and adult life," yet "there are strange and astounding exceptions to them" (9). Until the passage of the "Children's Charter," Waugh suggests, "it was lawful to make the baby toil for the man," and "These [toiling] children were regarded as the pantry, yielding the necessaries of adult life. They stood between the idle man and the gnawings of hunger. Their starving bodies were slowly transmuted into the muscles with which he got about" (9).

The "cannibalism" Waugh describes here is, obviously, very much akin to that described by Tonna in *Helen Fleetwood*, in that in both instances, the child's labour supports the parents, to the detriment of the child's own health and well-being. Although writers such as Norton and Trollope, however, understood that child labour might be motivated by fear of the family's *and* the child's starvation, Waugh sees it only as a reversal of the "general conditions" of life, the word "general" suggesting that there is no recognition, on his part, of the fact that "conditions" of life vary greatly from class to class. Any "exception" to these "general conditions" can be understood only as "strange and astounding," as the result of individual, rather than social, failings. The "gnawings of hunger," therefore, can be read not as the result of poverty, but of "idleness," a moral flaw. Murdering (by neglect) a child for its inheritance money, and living off a child's labour, are crimes that share, in other words, the same root cause. In both cases, the child is abused as a result of the parent's or guardian's failure to recognize his or her own duties and responsibilities towards the child. Such a stance succeeds in constructing child abuse as a crime that shares universal (i.e., non-class-specific) motivations, but it also succeeds in portraying choices influenced by poverty or necessity as evidence of a lack of affect.

The NSPCC and Child-Life Insurance

Nowhere, however, were issues of class, commerce, and child abuse more closely entangled than in the debate over child-life insurance. Such insurance allowed parents to receive money on the death of a child, ostensibly for the purposes of providing a decent burial. This practice, however, met with criticism on two major counts. The publication of Edwin Chadwick's "A Supplementary Report on the Results of a Special Inquiry into the Practice of Interment in Towns" in 1843 "set the pattern for bourgeois criticism of the working-class celebration of death" (Behlmer 120), suggesting as it did that "the poor … spent far too much on their funerals" (120). Such a criticism speaks to both the desire of middle-class commentators to impose models of frugality and respectability onto working-class homes, and the failure of these same commentators to recognize the motivations behind such a seemingly wasteful practice as the decent burial of a child. As Ellen Ross observes in *Love and Toil: Motherhood in Outcast London, 1870-1918*, "The

careful adherence to the rules of etiquette with respect to the dead child, sometimes against all reason and economy, reveals the same determination to do one's duty" that was a key aspect of working-class family life in the nineteenth century (193). The middle-class fear that the money lower-class families spent on child-life insurance could have been better spent, then, demonstrates the distance between middle-class and working-class expectations of how a parent should care for its children.

As stories such as that of Carlyle's Stockport parents suggest, however, child-life insurance aroused an even greater concern than excessively expensive child funerals. As Behlmer notes,

> the notorious financial instability of these clubs encouraged parents to buy multiple policies, particularly on the young, for whom insurance premiums might run as low as a penny per week. To Edwin Chadwick and many social critics after him, it seemed that duplicate policies on the lives of children earned reimbursements that were greater than the actual cost of a funeral, thereby sweetening the "temptation for evil." In extreme cases – for example, the Manchester man who enrolled his baby in nineteen different burial societies – Chadwick cautioned that the reward for a child's death could serve as "a bounty on neglectual infanticide." (121)

Concerns such a this were raised over the next twelve years in England, but although a variety of measures were undertaken by the government in response to these concerns, a lack of evidence that child-life insurance was in fact tempting parents to murder their children meant that no serious legal restrictions were put in place.[7]

The issue of child-life insurance continued to resurface, however, particularly after the emergence of large life-insurance companies, such as the Prudential. Earlier burial clubs were often run by working-men's associations based within the community, but larger insurance companies had no ties to the parents they represented other than a business relationship. "As a result," Behlmer argues, "mid-Victorian England witnessed the rise of burial societies wherein the mutual aid ideal gave way to an obsession with growth and profit" (125). Concerns about the influence of "profit" in a field in which money benefits accrued after the death of a child led to the appointment of a Royal

Commission on Friendly Societies in 1870.[8] The findings of the commission were such that the commissioners urged the prohibition of insurance of children, but "largely because of renewed pressure from burial societies, this guideline emerged in the Friendly Societies Act of 1875 … as ceilings of £10 and £6 on the lives of children under ten and five respectively" (126). These ceilings were felt to be insufficient to protect the lives of the children of the poor, and throughout the late 1870s and 1880s, child-life insurance continued to draw criticism. But with the emergence of child-protection in the 1880s, a new way of attacking the practice of child-life insurance presented itself: that of depicting the practice as a form of cruelty to children.

The London SPCC felt that child-life insurance encouraged unprincipled parents to neglect or even murder their offspring, and made a point of mentioning, in *The Child's Guardian*, those cases in which abused children were also insured children. Although insuring a child was not a crime, claims made within *The Child's Guardian* such as "fourteen of these 100 suffocated children were admittedly insured" ("Insurance and Suffocation in Liverpool" 93) sought to make the practice seem so, and the Society was "sufficiently impressed with the strength of public sentiment that it announced in October 1888 its commitment to the total abolition of insurance on young lives" (Behlmer 128). After its success bringing about the "Children's Charter" in 1889, and its reconstitution as the NSPCC in that same year, the Society seemed poised to take on what it perceived to be a grave threat to children in England, and by 1890, the NSPCC had prepared a bill for Parliament, proposing to restrict the size of payments for children, and to make all monies payable only to the undertaker, rather than the parents (Behlmer 129).

The NSPCC's involvement in the debate over child-life insurance, however, damaged the Society's claim that its work was "no class work" ("Notes" CG 3:36, 224). Child-life insurance was primarily bought by those who had no savings and insufficient income to pay for a funeral, and as such, any attack upon the practice was perceived to be an attack upon the working classes. Insurance journals accused the NSPCC of slandering the poor in its opposition to child-life insurance, claiming that "Baby is [the poor woman's] only treasure, and on it she lavishes a wealth of affection that is a beautiful illustration of the finer emotions" (qtd. in Behlmer 128). The language employed here suggests that the only "treasure" and "wealth" that is to be found in the relationship

between the working-class mother and her child is that of affection, and that any suggestion that such "treasure" could be displaced by financial gain is nothing less than an assault upon the working-class home. Waugh became, if his many "Notes" and articles on the subject are any indication, extraordinarily frustrated with such accusations. In a July 1890 article on "The Rights of the Working Man," Waugh argues that the suggestion that the NSPCC's bill "proposes to interfere with the working man's rights" is "false in sentiment and in fact," because "A right to do wrongs belongs to no man, whether conferred by Parliament or custom or brute force" (81). He continues, "'The rights of the working man!' The working man has neither more nor less rights than any other man" (81). According to Waugh, therefore, the NSPCC's attack upon child-life insurance was nothing less than positive evidence of the NSPCC's classless stance. "Wrongs" against children, regardless of who perpetrated them, and whatever custom they might have represented, could not be tolerated.

Although Waugh's reply to accusations of class-bias leveled against the NSPCC suggests, in part, a failure to recognize the extent to which applying "universal" standards based upon middle-class values might itself be a form of class bias, there is much to suggest in his writings on the subject of child-life insurance that his opposition to the practice went beyond a middle-class inability to respect working-class customs. Instead, Waugh's rhetoric on the subject of child-life insurance reveals a great anxiety about the influence of commerce upon the working-class home, and about the lack of "proper" domestic virtues within that home. In articles such as "Child-Life Insurance," published in the *Contemporary Review* in July 1890, Waugh disputes the charge that "to lay responsibility for the death of so many children at the door of child-insurance societies is a slander on the working class" (40) by arguing that "the class that is charged is all who worship a pound they have not got but want, more than a child they have got and do not want" (41). Instead of referring to class as something that is defined by economic or social status, Waugh suggests that this "class" of parents is distinguished by their immorality, and by their failure to feel proper affection for their children. Such a "class," of course, could include the rich as well as the poor, the guardians of well-endowed children and the parents of well-insured children alike. These are the parents, Waugh argues, to whom "a child presents greater attractions dead than alive, especially if alive it

costs sixpence and dead it is worth six shillings" (53) and, most importantly, "they exist in every rank" (53).

When Waugh says, however, that the "class" he is referring to is not the "respectable poor" but, instead, "that inglorious herd of people who are everywhere the perplexity of our police" (52), it becomes obvious that he is speaking primarily of parents of the lower- and working-classes. For Waugh's descriptions of those who love money before children work very much within classed rhetoric about criminality and the lower orders current at the end of the nineteenth century. This rhetoric, according to Marie-Christine Leps in *Apprehending the Criminal: The Production of Deviance in Nineteenth-Century Discourse*, depicted "the 'laboring and dangerous classes' as a separate race, primitive, animal-like and threatening" (Leps 5), as "an atavistic resurgence of 'prehistoric man'" (5). Depictions of the criminal dovetailed with that of the pauper, who was seen as "defective, lazy, and unintelligent" (4). Waugh's representations of abusive parents, throughout his writings, share the qualities of both the criminal and the pauper as described by Leps: they are "big-limbed, arbitrary" (Waugh, "Street Children" 827), "reckless men" (Waugh and Manning 699), "impecunious, idle people" ("Child-Life Insurance" 41), "lazy as sloths, lustful as monkeys, crafty as serpents, savage as tigers" (53), and mere "she-things" ("Baby Farming" 705). These descriptions of abusive parents emphasize the separation between them and "the genuine British mother and father" ("Child-Life Insurance" 52), and consequently, mark these brutal parents as a distinct social class, one whose ills are "considered signs of moral weakness rather than economic struggles" (Leps 26).

But what is particularly frightening to Waugh about these parents is that this "herd of reckless married and unmarried creatures with maternal organism," with "males to match them," "have babies" ("Child-Life Insurance" 53). Waugh's language suggests that though these parents have "babies," they are not truly "mothers" or "fathers," but instead only "creatures with maternal organism." Such female creatures might be able to procreate, that is, but they are not able (or willing) to fulfill the affective role that "mother" suggests. Considering the innocence, fragility, and holiness of the child (as discussed in Chapter One), this lack of affect on the part of "reckless" parents makes them unfit for the very role that their "organism" allows them to undertake. Waugh's

concern, however, is not elicited solely on behalf of these parents' offspring, but on behalf of English society itself, because the ability of this class to grow is of grave concern. The "inglorious herd" (52), according to Waugh, are strong "hardy folks" (50) of the "stolid Amazon type" (51), and they give birth to children who "are hardy themselves, and therefore hard to kill" (50). Despite the fear that child-life insurance led to countless deaths of insured children, the anxiety these images express is that this "herd" has the capacity to replicate itself. Considering that London at the end of the nineteenth century "was a city of children, and its poor districts contained the greatest number of them" (Ross 13),[9] and that prevailing discourses about the urban slums depicted them "as symptoms of a physical and moral deterioration of society" (Leps 23), it becomes clear that Waugh's images of savage fertility tapped into common fears about the growth of the lower classes.

This fear is tied, in Waugh's rhetoric, to a belief that the ability of this "herd" to breed and multiply is matched only by the ability of corrupt business to do the same. Waugh argues that the incentive of the insurance agent to sell as many policies as possible is that "Offices must have increase" ("Child-Life Insurance" 54). The necessity, and ability, of corrupt businesses to "increase," is a source of concern because these businesses, like their clients, tend to spread contamination and death while they do so. Waugh focuses particularly upon the "touts," the "paid agents" of insurance companies who sold policies door-to-door (Behlmer 125) who, he argues, were "silently teaching strong lessons on a vast scale" ("Child-Life Insurance" 52) to their clients. These lessons, the NSPCC believed, resulted in child murder in "vast numbers" (42). The growth of the insurance industry is therefore depicted as directly connected to a perceived increase in the starvation of children, children of whom there is, because of their parent's ability to "have babies," an endless supply. Both the insurer and the client benefit from the "increase" of the child population (and from the death of those children), making them both "cannibals" upon England's children.

The alliance between the insurance companies and the savage (lower-class) parent is therefore appalling because it teaches that parent to be the wrong kind of "productive" member of society. The lessons these "touts" teach the "inglorious herd" is how to put their productive powers to work for them, how to transform their children into food and

drink. The business in which the insurance company and the abusive parent are engaged is that of "the making of 30s. on starved [children] for the churchyard" ("Children as Articles of Commerce" 122), money which can then be spent by "the drinking, gambling, impure" and "idle" ("Notes" CG 4:8, 91) as they see fit. This system of money-benefit, according to Waugh, "incites such to change the child for the pound" ("Child-Life Insurance" 41), a system of exchange which perverts the proper parental role of caring and nurturing the child. Instead, the "effect of a policy on the matter of which the child is composed tends not to the preservation but to the waste of it, and to the rate and certainty with which infantile disease becomes fatal to it" (58). Child-life insurance here represents, again, a form of economic cannibalism, as the parents reap financial benefits through a process which consumes the flesh and blood of their children. The homes produced by this kind of exchange are therefore a dark counterpart to the ideal English home: rather than the parent working to support children with whom they share bonds of love and affection, these children support their parents at the expense of their own bodies, while the parents feel "a strong animal affection for one another" and provide "nothing" for their children ("Child-Life Insurance" 49).

The influence of corrupt business upon the lives and homes of lower- and working-class families is a source of fear, moreover, because it threatens English society itself. Towards the goal of increased benefit, the insurance companies, according to Waugh, undertake the education of their clients. The system of money-benefit seeks to convert "impecunious, idle people into crafty murderers. It teaches the drunkard that to face his son's death is the way to drown his raging thirst" (41). In order to do these things, of course, the "idle" and the "impecunious" must be taught how to cheat the legal system, something which Waugh believes the insurance industry is well-suited to teach. Touts (by their actions, if not by their words) suggest to their clients that "You may go the inquest, and because two of you were in the room, neither of you being able to give evidence against the other; you may escape by the skin of your teeth; you may be called by the court 'a disgrace to humanity;' only pay me your pennies, and when denounced you leave the court, I will give you my pounds" (52). The touts instruct the avaricious parent, Waugh argues, that the denunciation of those in authority means nothing, and that money means everything. With this instruction, the parent goes on to dupe those in

power, and Waugh marvels at "the crafty practices whereby child-killing is accomplished and yet inquests are escaped" and laments that "defrauding the coroner of his case is the rule, not the exception" (43). The fear elicited by the alliance between the money-loving parent and the money-loving tout is not just, therefore, on behalf of the child, but on behalf of the rule of law. The failure of these parents to respect the natural order, that is, to feel "natural affection" for their children ("Doing Children to Death for Money" 85), or to obey "the general conditions of child and adult life" by providing for those children ("Cannibalism in England" 9), threatens the very fabric of society.

What might appear to be a domestic scandal, then, becomes, in Waugh's article, a national shame, one which must be addressed "for the sake of England's children and the morals and interests of their homes" (63). Because the alliance between the lower classes and the insurance industry perverts the home itself, it "degrades" the community (53). The "moral sense of the nation" (63), Waugh therefore argues, depends upon "the convenience of commerce" being made "to bend to the comfort and safety of our children" (63), for, as Waugh argues, "A child dishonoured is a nation's bane" (59). These pronouncements by Waugh serve to underline a perceived connection between home and nation, wherein the failure to uphold the "natural" order within one leads to the destruction of the other. These sentiments do not, of course, displace responsibility for the child's suffering from the abusive, neglectful parent, but they do place the imperative to address that suffering on the national level. The failure to intercede on behalf of the child is a failure not only to protect that child, but also to uphold the laws of England. Child-life insurance, then, "Whether it be by the societies, their agents, the undertakers, or the parents … must be treated as a serious crime, against both the bodies of children and the welfare of the State" (63).

Waugh and the NSPCC believed that the only way to treat child-life insurance as a "serious crime" was through "the abolition of all child death-money payments" (62). Such an aim, however, was never to be achieved. Though the NSPCC "thought it wise to print a special supplement of *The Child's Guardian*" which featured "four closely printed pages of testimony from doctors, coroners, judges, Poor Law officials and policemen, all of whom were critical of child life insurance," but, "As the insurance press had correctly noted … most of the NSPCC's inspectors offered impressions rather than facts" (Behlmer

132). Even the narratives the NSPCC printed in its August 1890 issue of *The Child's Guardian* failed to offer conclusive evidence that parents were "doing children to death for money" (as the opening editorial proclaimed), for although the NSPCC entitled these cases "The Way to £20" and "A £5 Prize for Killing a Baby," the cases themselves contained the same stories of neglect and abuse that could be found in any of the NSPCC's cases. In one, entitled "£17 7s. Od.: Bonuses on Neglect," the description of the family and their home simply underlines their desperately impoverished condition. The house is described as being "in a shockingly neglected condition, very filthy. The bed-room in which the prisoners and their family slept measured 14ft. by 12ft., the height being 9ft. .... The heads of the [six] children were covered with sores, and full of vermin; in fact, they were generally in a disgraceful condition" (88). Though the article provides in great detail the cross-examination of the parents' insurance agent, the parents themselves are given no voice: instead, the reader is provided with the instructions they receive at the end of the trial for neglect, in which it is hoped that "the prisoners would consider the responsibilities devolving upon them as parents – a responsibility they could not get rid of so long as the children were dependent on them" (89).

Although this case is indicative of the kinds of cases the NSPCC investigated and prosecuted under "The Children's Charter," it does not provide, in its details, any solid evidence to suggest that these children were, in fact, neglected for their insurance money. The shocking condition of the home could certainly indicate that the parents might have spent their pennies on their children, rather than on insurance, but the case also points out that the mother had failed to make the payments on the insurance, and could not pay the arrears of 1s. 3d. (89). Plainly, the parents not only failed to feed their children; they also did not meet the demands of the insurance agreement. Therefore, other than the title, this case does not support the NSPCC's argument against child-life insurance, which is true of the majority of the narratives the NSPCC provided. Because the NSPCC's rhetoric on the subject could not be matched by actual evidence, that rhetoric gave the insurance industry its strongest defense, because Waugh's attacks upon child-life insurance could be read as signs of the extent to which he "overestimated the ease with which working-class mothers and fathers might be tempted to barbarism" (Behlmer 136). Furthermore, as a result of a lack of factual evidence, the NSPCC's bill to abolish child-life insurance

failed, as did every measure against the practice brought before parliament in the following years (Behlmer 135).

The lack of any persuasive support for his attacks is a point on which Waugh expressed great frustration. As he complains in "Child-Life Insurance,"

> I am at a loss to understand the state of mind which excludes all the merely probable, however highly probable, from consideration, where all that happens happens to a little invalid in the sole charge of a drunken nurse, who has £6 coming at that little invalid's death; where, whatever moral certainty there may be in the doctor and amongst the neighbours, based on however many outside facts, as to what happened in the sickroom, is of no assize value; where, the child once dead, neither of its parents can give evidence as to what the other did. With the largest acquaintance of domestic crimes as a prosecutor of any person in England, I say that while such a course is adopted, the problem of child murder for life insurance money cannot be solved; it cannot be approached. (60)

The problem Waugh identifies here is that of access to the lower- and working-class home, of ascertaining what goes on within it beyond the point of "moral certainty" and "outside facts." Though he may have the "largest acquaintance of domestic crimes," an acquaintance that provides him with an intimate understanding of what is "highly probable," the problem itself "cannot be approached."

Or, to be more specific, it cannot be approached by the right people. Waugh laments that "It is miserable to a patriot to think how many of these collectors of premiums upon child death policies openly, week by week, call at doors within which, the neighbours believe, a child is being slowly neglected to death, – a fact, by the way, with which the canvassers have no concerns" (49). The home might be closed to those – such as neighbours, doctors, or coroners – who are most invested in the child's well-being, but it is open to those who "have no concerns" for the child. The working-class home is therefore permeable by those who will have no positive effect upon it: who will not support or instruct the parents in their proper responsibilities and duties, but will instead teach the parents "lessons" that will lead to the degradation of that home. Although, Waugh argues, the tout may have "eyes in his head to see what he was doing"

(49) to the children in the home, he has "orders" (49) to continue with his work. Under the system of child-life insurance, then, those who are privileged to see what others can only "believe" to be happening, are bound, by their love of money and the demands of commerce, not to intervene. As long as those who have no investment in supporting proper parental care and affection in the home have the most access to it, Waugh suggests, the children of the poor will be at risk, and, as Waugh's appeal to "patriots" makes apparent, so too will the nation itself. Waugh's battle against child-life insurance, then, is as much a battle for influence within the working-class home as it is an attack on the practice itself.

It is also, however, a battle on behalf of the nation's commerce. For though children might die for many reasons, Waugh argues, "whatever these may be, if money benefit does not arise, the commerce of the country may wash its hands of all complicity. Till then, child-blood is on them" ("Child-Life Insurance" 59). As long as the spirit of commercial competition overrides the dictates of domestic ideology, as in the alliance between the working-class parent and the insurance tout, Waugh suggests that both of England's attributes – its homes and its commerce – will be at risk. The nation's commercial spirit can only be healthily sustained when it is balanced by an awareness of the importance of love, affection, and care within the home. Insurance companies, motivated as they are by competition and avarice, cannot care about the "children of unnatural mothers and fathers" ("Doing Children to Death" 85).

By contrast, however, the NSPCC's sole interest in the lower- and working-class home is in reform, its sole desire to transform "parents, who are absolutely indifferent to their children's necessities and welfare, who even hate their children and see in their helplessness inducement to tyranny" into parents who "treat them with care, with even affection" (33). Where the bad influence of commerce degrades the home, the NSPCC's influence restores its proper order:

> By the Society's treatment, and in a way little short of amazing to the ordinary mind, in ten thousand bad parents' conduct care has taken the place of indifference, and in thousands love has taken the place of hate. Under the means the Society employs, natural feelings have proven to be hidden, and those feelings have had the opportunity given to them to arise,

> have of themselves arisen, have been cultivated and strengthened, and have become in the strictest sense the feelings generally operating between the human race and its offspring. (Waugh, "Emancipation" 33)

"Natural feelings," ones "generally operating" between parents and children are found, awakened, and restored, Waugh argues, through the NSPCC's "treatment." The insurance agent might have "eyes in his head," but he does not have the will or desire to see the true potential of the lower- and working-class parent. The NSPCC can see that potential, however, and if given more influence upon the home than that of commerce, will bring about a reformation within it by attacking "unnatural habits and tastes which prevent natural parental feeling arising" (33). Necessity and starvation are not, therefore, what primarily threatens poor children and poor families; instead, it is the fact that the "old kindly affections of our race for its young have lapsed" (33). Those "kindly feelings can be rekindled, but only through the proper guidance, and the proper education. In order for the homes of England to be saved, they must be open not to commerce, but to intervention, not to the tout, but to the inspector.

Notes

[1] Most notable, perhaps, is the work on behalf of chimney-sweeps by Jonas Hanway, who in 1770 "helped to set up a Friendly Society of Chimney Sweepers, and then in 1773 … headed a Committee in Behalf of Chimney-Sweepers' Young Apprentices, and wrote a book which highlighted their condition" (Cunningham, *Children of the Poor* 53).

[2] In *The Erosion of Childhood: Child Oppression in Britain 1860-1918*, Lionel Rose argues that

> Under the old cottage system of production, where the children were under parental supervision, conditions were at least as bad; children received no wages, and young hand-loomers might work in cold, damp cellars. There

were, it seems, some indications that factory children were in less bad health than child domestic weavers in the 1830s. (8)

[3] While texts which focused on labour in the factories often did so on behalf of children, women working in the factories were equally a subject of concern. As Deborah Kaplan argues in "The Woman Worker in Charlotte Elizabeth Tonna's Fiction," "Tonna's fictions express a 'myth' of the fall of working women out of the supposedly natural state of feminine domesticity and into industrial capitalism" (52). As with children, women who worked in the factories were perceived as threats to the income of male bread-winners (55), or as dangerously sexualized by the immoral behaviour in the factories (Robson 70-71).

[4] According to Catherine Robson, the Factories Legislation Act of 1833 "established a minimum age of nine for all workers in textile mills … and also set a maximum forty-eight-hour working week for children between the ages of nine and twelve, and a sixty-nine-hour week for thirteen- to seventeen-year-olds and women" (62). In response to the Royal Commission on Children's Employment of 1842-3, legislation was passed in which "girls and women were totally excluded from colliery labor, but the proposed prohibition of boys under thirteen was soundly defeated" (73-74).

[5] According to Davidoff and Hall, this "romantic vision" consisted of escapes into nature: "Young chemists and attorneys could leave their mundane occupations for walking tours in the mountains and, more sedately, with their sisters or sweethearts, passionately experience sunsets or seaside vistas" (28).

[6] Although Arthur Gride is undoubtedly attracted to Madeline Bray because she is, as he describes her, "a delicate and beautiful creature" (545), his primary reason for wishing to marry her is so he can take possession of "some little property – very little – to which this pretty chick was entitled; which nobody does or can know of at this time, but which her husband could sweep into his pouch" (547). The property's value, of course, is not "very little."

[7] Behlmer notes that in August 1850 "Parliament passed legislation (13 & 14 Vic., c. 115) that prohibited burial insurance in excess of £3 on any child under the age of ten. More importantly, the Act stipulated that all death benefits be paid directly to the undertaker" (123). However,

> The legislation of 1850 was experimental, intended to stay in force for one year only .... When in 1854 the House of Commons requested a list of persons tried during the previous decade for the murder of children who were members of burial societies, MPs found that neither the Record of Trials nor the Clerks of Assize could supply the desired information .... Still, political luminaries such as Lords Palmerston, Stanley, and Shaftesbury were sufficiently disturbed by continuing allegations of foul play in connection with burial clubs that Parliament in 1854 appointed a select committee to review a proposed friendly societies bill. (123)

Opponents to restrictions on burial insurance argued that £3 was not enough to decently bury a child, and that "Legislation that barred the poor from conducting the last rites for their own children was insulting" (124). As a result of these objections, "the select committee concluded that the murder of children was not demonstrably linked with burial insurance, and so recommended only minor modifications in the law" (124).

[8] As Behlmer notes, "That the mortality rate for children in heavily insured Liverpool jumped inexplicably during the second year of life, 'precisely within the year when infants can first come into full insurance benefits,' thus impressed the commissioners as strong circumstantial evidence against such policies" (126).

[9] According to Ellen Ross, "In 1871, 43 percent of the population [of London] were aged fifteen or younger. By 1901, despite a birthrate that had been declining for four decades and the continuing influx of single adults, London's population was still nearly a third children ..." (13).

Chapter Four
Facts and their Meaning: The NSPCC and Narratives of Child-Protection

In my examinations, thus far, of the child and the animal, the child performer, and the child as the victim of commerce, I have been interested in tracing the continuities between these separate categories and the variety of representative interventions encompassed within them, and in demonstrating how this continuity centers upon the increasingly dominant conception of childhood as a time of dependence, happiness, and innocence. Whether the child was endangered by labour, sexuality, or avarice, the nature of child peril was, perhaps surprisingly, very much the same: children of all classes were endangered when they were not allowed to be, or were not provided with the environment or protection to be, "proper" children. As I have endeavoured to show, the late nineteenth-century concept of "cruelty to children" can be understood as encompassing these pre-existing narratives, as the NSPCC's categories of "improper employment," "dangerous performance," "neglect" and "other wrongs," strongly suggests.

Although the continuity between earlier interventions on behalf of endangered children and the NSPCC's work on behalf of abused children is fairly evident, however, the NSPCC constructed child abuse as a secret, hidden crime – one that its publications alone made visible to a shocked and incredulous public. As has been demonstrated in the previous chapters, not only did the emergent crime of cruelty to children subsume concerns about child endangerment that had been the subject of public debate throughout the nineteenth century, but also, acts of cruelty to children were recognized and abhorred long before the founding of the London SPCC. Nevertheless, Benjamin Waugh argued in 1888 that "The public know next to nothing about the nature and extent of cruelty to children" ("Notes" CG 1:4, 30). The only way to remedy this lack of knowledge on the part of the English public as to the "nature and extent of cruelty to children," according to Waugh and the NSPCC, was through the publication of facts, elicited by the NSPCC's inspectors' casework, and then disclosed to the public through Waugh's writings for journals, through pamphlets, and through *The Child's Guardian* itself.

In this chapter, I will argue that the NSPCC's construction of cruelty to children as a hidden, secret, unknown crime provided the Society with a great deal of flexibility,

because it allowed it to build upon existing narratives of child endangerment while still suggesting that its own work was uniquely urgent, and uniquely specialized. But perhaps more importantly, it also allowed the NSPCC to diverge from these residual narratives, and thus to provide new solutions to them. Because the child, particularly in literary representations, could be made to mean in so many ways, the blame for its endangerment could be dispersed and assigned to a variety of "perpetrators": the child's own "nature," the theatrical community, the hypocritical middle classes, the factory system, or the working-class home. With the emergence of the NSPCC and the codification of these residual narratives in the new crime of "cruelty to children," however, the meaning of the abused child became much more limited. By and large, the abused child of NSPCC rhetoric is an indictment against its parents, and its abuse speaks to the failure of the home to meet the demands of "proper" childhood. Where that indictment spoke to national failings, such as the failure of the nation to acknowledge the existence of child abuse, it had a social context, but it was visited out in the individual home, and in the individual cases the NSPCC investigated. The intervention required of the public in cases of child abuse was always the same: to acknowledge the existence of the problem, and to support the NSPCC in its work to combat it. This chapter will therefore focus on the use of "facts" from case studies and the way that these facts were used by the NSPCC to construct meaning – about the abused child, the abusive parent, the act of abuse itself, and the English public.

The Case Study

My chapters thus far have focused, by and large, on literary representations of endangered children as precursors to the NSPCC's construction of the abused child. Although there is an evident connection between the social-scientific rhetoric of the NSPCC and earlier case studies and government reports – such as Mary Carpenter's *Juvenile Delinquents* or the Children's Employment Commission of 1842 – the significance of literary representations is, it seems to me, undeniable, both in their construction of childhood and its meaning, and in their ability to represent the interior experiences, as well as the suffering bodies, of imperiled children. The conception of the child as an innocent, feeling, unique subject was very much a construction of Romantic

and Victorian literature, and such texts "made it easy, unavoidable almost, to assume the living reality and splendour of such an essential being as *The* Child, who is unmarked by time, place, class, or gender but is represented as in all places and all times the same" (Plotz 5). But if literary texts made possible the imagining of the "living reality and splendour" of the child, they also made it possible to explore that being's suffering – to imagine and possibly comprehend the unique pain and fear the child felt in a threatening world. It is literature's ability, therefore, to depict a child's feeling – such as Ozias Midwinter's grief at the death of his brother, the "stage-wonder's" fear during the performance, and Flora Dombey's feelings of loneliness and isolation at her father's neglect – that helped to make the child an object of social and legislative concern, as well as to define its particular vulnerabilities and needs.

Although literature played a key role in developing narratives about the child and about child endangerment, narratives that supported the project of child protection at the end of the nineteenth century, statistics were also key to the emergence of the abused child. Organizations like the National Association for the Promotion of Social Science, and key documents such as James Phillip Kay's *The Moral and Physical Conditions of the Labouring Classes* and Edwin Chadwick's *Report on the Sanitary Conditions in England* relied on statistical studies to provide what was felt to be a comprehensive depiction of social problems in England. Such studies, according to Kay, allowed an "approximation of truth" (18), relying as they did on both "minute and accurate" (18) information, and on the first-hand knowledge of the investigator. As a result of such claims, statistics increasingly became an authoritative means of accessing and assessing populations and of describing social problems to the English government and the public. Although statistical studies such as Kay's were "minute and accurate," however, his army of facts about the working classes tended to flatten out the subject he described: in his study, all homes in England merge into one, tiny, infested flat, filled with savage and unrecognizable beings. This flattening effect was partially Kay's intent, as it allowed him to make sweeping generalizations about the subject at hand, but it is also an important failure in his document. His depictions do not elicit sympathy so much as fear and loathing – the men and women he describes are animalistic and depraved, and the children are reduced to a kind of background scenery: squalling, dirty, and numerous.

Kay's focus on minutely accurate facts produces a scene of squalor that seems irresolvable, and his statistics become bewilderingly oppressive, producing a sense of the social as massive, uncontrollable, and beyond enumeration.

The flattening nature of statistics such as Kay's led many, particularly writers of literature, to question the usefulness of such data.[1] As George Eliot noted in 1856, "generalizations and statistics require a sympathy ready-made, a moral sentiment already in activity" (270) that could best be constructed, as in the case of the suffering and endangered child, through literary representation. But case studies such as Mary Carpenter's *Juvenile Delinquents* achieved a balance between "generalizations" and "sympathy" through the use of *both* statistics and exemplary narratives, a balance that presented social problems as widespread, but also as individually experienced. The case study therefore provided nineteenth-century reformers with a supple form of representation in which the needs of the investigator – to find and evaluate suffering individuals – and the needs of the public – to feel that a relationship had been formed between them and the sufferer – could be met. In forging a connection between reader and suffering subject, case studies such as Carpenter's relied upon what Thomas Lacqueur identifies as "the humanitarian narrative," that is, narratives that "speak in an extraordinarily detailed fashion about the pains and deaths of ordinary people in such a way as to make apparent the causal chains that might connect the action of its readers with the suffering of its subjects" (Lacqueur 177). These narratives center upon "detail as the sign of truth," on "the personal body, not only as the locus of pain but also as the common bond between those who suffer and those who would help" (177) and finally, upon the possibility and moral imperative of "ameliorative action" (178). Through the combination of details and the construction of a "common bond" between the reader and the suffering subject, therefore, nineteenth-century case studies drew upon the "'reality effect' of the literary technique through which the experiences of others are represented as real" (177).

While the humanitarian narrative implicit in case studies such as Carpenter's worked by creating bonds of sympathy that suggested that the suffering subject could be both known and knowable, case studies also "privileged minute particulars obtained by eyewitness investigation" (Poovey 74). Therefore, although "ready-made" sympathies

contributed to the effectiveness of such studies, these sympathies were always mediated through the authority of the person, or, as in the case of the NSPCC, the association that had made these facts apparent. Without the work of social investigation, such narratives implied, facts and realities about the suffering subject would remain hidden and, therefore, unknowable. As a result, "this epistemology … located truth in dark recesses, which only theoretical interpretation could illuminate" (Poovey 74). This "theoretical interpretation" required the skill of those with first-hand knowledge, and, by the end of the nineteenth century, expert knowledge. Case studies therefore posited the existence of "ready-made sympathy," but also posited that such sympathy could only be marshaled into "ameliorative action" through the work of the investigator.

The Humanitarian Narration and Child-Protection Propaganda

The NSPCC, like other groups before it, claimed to have brought to light a hidden problem, one that could be revealed only through the investigative work of its inspectors. In its early years, however, Behlmer argues that the London SPCC "contributed little to an understanding of the causes of child abuse" (70). By contrast, the Liverpool SPCC, in a review of its work undertaken in 1884, "found child abuse to be a complex problem" (71). In its analysis of the "apparent cause of trouble" in child-abuse cases, the Liverpool SPCC discovered

> that mistreatment of the young rarely stemmed from personal characteristics of adults ('hasty temper') or children ('wilfulness'). Rather, the Society's statistics suggest that child abuse was, at base, an environmental problem, and as such, its elimination would require drastic improvement in the social and economic conditions of inner-city life. (73)

The connection uncovered by the Liverpool Society between child abuse and the "social and economic conditions of inner-city life" meant that the problem of "cruelty to children" had much in common with the kinds of concerns identified in Mary Carpenter's work with juvenile delinquents and even in Mayhew's social investigations. It also meant, however, that the work of child protection – that is, apprehending the child and punishing the parent – would do little to solve the problem at hand. As a result, Behlmer

notes, it is not surprising that "the Liverpool SPCC declined to elaborate on findings that could be interpreted as showing the futility of its own work" (73).

Although the Liverpool Society was founded earlier and had greater experience in child protection than did the fledgling London SPCC, the London SPCC, primarily through the work of Benjamin Waugh, did more to disseminate a clear message, through its many publications, of what it understood "cruelty to children" to be. Rather than grappling with the different causes of abuse, as the Liverpool SPCC had done, the London SPCC instead depicted abuse as the result of character flaws in the abuser, flaws that could be addressed through the intervention of the Society and through legislative change. The cause or nature of these flaws, however, was not always clearly explained. In "The Child of the English Savage," for example, Cardinal Manning and Benjamin Waugh locate the origins of cruelty within the "peculiarity of spirit of the adult abuser of the child" (696). They also argue, however, that "Men become addicted to cruelty as they become addicted to drink and gambling. It is a vile pleasure in which they indulge, some occasionally, some persistently; making their homes into little hells" (696). The idea that "Men become addicted to cruelty as they become addicted to gambling" seems to suggest, at least by association, an environmental understanding of abuse: that is, that one becomes cruel through constant exposure and practice, rather than naturally, as suggested by the associations found in such terms as "vile pleasure" and "peculiarity of spirit."

This seeming contradiction in Waugh and Manning's discourse springs, I would argue, from the necessity of constructing an "all-encompassing" (Cunningham, *Children of the Poor* 144) narrative of abuse that could account for the kinds of situations that the London SPCC might encounter. What caused the "English savage" to be savage, therefore, was less important for Waugh and Manning than describing the behaviour associated with such savagery:

> His clenched fist could have broken open a door at a blow, and with it, in his anger, he felled a child three years and a half old, making the little fellow giddy for days, and while he was thus giddy felled him again; and because the terrible pain he inflicted made the child cry, he pushed three

> of his huge fingers down the little weeper's throat – 'plugging the little devil's windpipe,' as he laughingly described it. (694)

Such sadism as Waugh and Manning describe here is typical of the London SPCC's early depictions of cruelty to children. The parent is always described as physically strong, as emotionally volatile, and as entirely unrepentant, while the child victim (as discussed in Chapter One) is physically weak, submissive, and forgiving: "a more docile child, or one more ready to twine his arms round your neck, you seldom find than was the little fellow he again and again made giddy with his deadly blows" (694).

According to Waugh and Manning, therefore, the crux of cruelty to children lies in the contrast between these two opposing natures and temperaments: they identify "the real root of persistent savagery" in "a sullen, ill-conditioned disposition" and "a cowardice which limits its gratification to unresisting and helpless things" (696). Such an understanding of cruelty is very similar to Frances Power Cobbe's concept of "heteropathy," which "consists in anger and cruelty, excited by the signs of pain": "the more the tyrant causes the victim to suffer the more he hates him, and desires to heap on him fresh suffering" (Cobbe 119). However, the London SPCC depicted cruelty to children as unique, in that it was, in part, a crime entirely connected to the singular nature of the child itself. That is, while Waugh and Manning are careful to explain that cruelty to children "is not due to peculiarity in the spirit of the abused child" (696), their suggestion that cruelty is aroused by "unresisting and helpless things" – of which, they argue, children are the most exemplary – does suggest that cruelty to children is different from other forms of cruelty. As Waugh argues in "The Prevention of Cruelty to Children," "it is almost universally true that the more innocent and simple the child is – the better looking-glass does it make for its haters to see their own black villainy in" (143-44). The child might not be the cause of the abuse through any actions of its own, but Waugh suggests that childhood itself, and in particular, its contrast with the savagery and violence of the abuser, is both what incites child abuse, and what makes it particularly heinous.

Because the London SPCC located cruelty within the individual, rather than the environment, it could argue that child abuse was a crime that defied class or gender boundaries. An "ill-conditioned disposition" could be found in individuals from every

class and from either gender, and while "Cruelty to offspring people tacitly accept as the accompaniment of great poverty, squalor, and social misfortune," Waugh and Manning argue that "against the poor, the terribly poor, [the Society] can bring hardly a complaint" (691). Instead, abusers exist "anywhere and everywhere" (699). Furthermore, Waugh and Manning are also careful to relate stories of female savages who also torture their children, saying of one such case, "This child was the mother's own, her only one, and she was in good earnings" (698). The description of the child as the "mother's own" suggests that the mother's abuse of a child arouses particular horror; however, in this article, Waugh and Manning focus more upon the father as the subject of concern. Because fathers had sole custody of children,[2] it was their rights that the London SPCC sought to challenge, and as a result, the "English savage" is primarily gendered as male. Furthermore, Waugh and Manning's attack is leveled at the "Englishman's castle," for it is there, they argue, that cruelty's "doer is most secure from detection" (689). As long as the English savage is allowed sole rule over his home, the savage's "castle" will remain a "dungeon" for tortured and abused children.

Both the complaint that the "Englishman's castle" permits the abuser to be secure from detection and the description of the home as a dungeon suggest that cruelty to children occurs in secret places, hidden from the public eye; such a suggestion does not, however, entirely encompass the London SPCC's stance on the issue of child abuse. The English savage might be protected by his private rights over his own home, and cruelty may go undetected within that space, but Waugh and Manning also argue that child abuse is known, is recognized, and that, in fact, society chooses to turn a blind eye. In recounting a case in which two children were starved to death, Waugh and Manning exclaim, "how much of this horrible guilt is society's! … there were no neighbours' curses on the woman; no blows drove the man from his work. Folks get to think that these things are to be allowed" (693). The failure of parliament, Waugh and Manning reason, "to place the child of the savage on the same level as his dog" (698), results in an assumption that parents can treat children as well, or as poorly, as they choose. Neighbours, therefore, may recognize that a child is being harmed, but do nothing to intervene because it is "a man's own child" (699) and as a result, Waugh and Manning

argue, "boys and girls are being hurt, degraded, killed, that reckless men may sing songs to personal liberty, parental rights, and God knows what" (699).

By depicting child abuse as both hidden and unknown, and as known and recognized, Waugh and Manning were able to create a definition of abuse that encompassed the wide variety of situations in which the Society was involved. Some abuse, because of the relative wealth or status of the family, could be hidden, and the fear that abuse in middle- and upper-class homes was entirely obscured from the public eye can be seen in Waugh and Manning's description of a case in which the abused child "did not live in a crowded slum, but in an isolated cottage, surrounded by a garden" (695). Like Frances Power Cobbe, who believed that domestic violence against women "exists in the upper and middle classes rather more, I fear, than is generally recognized" (Cobbe 113), the London SPCC may have understood that certain homes provided more security from detection from state intervention than others. Lower- and working-class homes, by contrast, were eminently visible, to neighbours, to police, to school board officials, and to private charities. Within homes such as these, abuse of children might be everyday seen or heard, but never, as far as Waugh and Manning were concerned, properly addressed.

What was important, therefore, in terms of all cases of abuse was to make the abuse visible to the right people; that is, to make it visible to those who would feel the proper sympathy, and be moved to provide the proper help. With the founding of *The Child's Guardian* in January 1887, the London SPCC found the means by which to reach "such persons as are already interested in the condition of little victims of cruel treatment, wrongful neglect, and improper employment" ("Untitled" CG 1:1, 1) and instruct them as to "what they can and cannot do about these evils" (1). Through his appeal to those "already interested" in child abuse, Waugh acknowledged that there was already a "ready-made" sympathy in place to which the Society could make its cause known. Waugh argued, however, that although "Interest in children, and horror at what is suffered by them at the hands of brutal, ill-living parents is common enough … it is largely without knowledge of the provision of the law for children's protection" (1). The reality of cruelty towards children might have been known and recognized in England; according to Waugh, however, the law, and the protections it might offer to the child,

were not, and the London SPCC's role was therefore to mobilize and bring together both the public and the state on behalf of abused and suffering children.

The format of *The Child's Guardian* remained fairly constant for the remainder of the century. Issues opened with editorials or cover stories written by Waugh that addressed a variety of topics relevant to the child protection movement, such as "Recent Events" (CG 1:10, 73), "A Look Behind and Before" (4:1,1), or "Doing Children to Death for Money" (4:8, 85).[3] The cover stories often (especially at the beginning of *The Child's Guardian*'s run) provided detailed descriptions of important cases the London SPCC had undertaken, such as "The Story of the Shrewsbury Case" (1:2, 9), "The Cromford Case" (2:14, 9), and "An Invalid Child Acrobat" (3:31, 113).[4] *The Child's Guardian* also sometimes included articles written by other members of the Society, and often provided excerpts from other journals or newspapers supporting the London SPCC,[5] demonstrating the extent to which the Society had succeeded in publicizing its work. Finally, each issue included a "Notes" section, in which Waugh responded to current events, questions, and complaints the London SPCC faced.

The bulk of the journal, however, consisted of abuse narratives, narratives that took readers inside the Englishman's castle in order to expose the abuse within to the Society's audience. Waugh opens his article on "The Story of the Shrewsbury Case," for example, with "the story runs thus" (CG 1:2, 9):

> "Spell 'fox,'" said the mother. "F-o-k-s," replied the child. "You know better," said the mother. "F-o-x," the child rejoined. "Now, you knew all along; I know you did, and if you say you didn't I'll punish you," said the mother. "I know'd all the time," the little girl said, to the promise of punishment if she did not say so. The child might have "know'd all the while," yet it needs no deep insight to see how, under the look of a hard face, and the sound of a domineering voice, she could forget that fox had only three letters. "I knew you did; I shall punish you," was the mother's reply. Punishment she was to have. If she said she did *not* know – punishment; now she had said she did know – punishment – punishment either way. (9)

The influence of novelistic writing – what Lacqueur refers to as the "'reality effect' of the literary technique" (177) – is very evident in this passage. Waugh uses dialogue both to give a sense of urgency to the passage by transforming the reader into an-eye witness, and to capture the child's voice, stressing her youth through the ungrammatical structure of her speech. As well, he creates a bond of sympathy between the child and the reading audience by urging the reader to imagine being "under the look of a hard face, and the sound of a domineering voice."

Furthermore, by beginning with such a seemingly innocuous and everyday occurrence in family life (a parent instructing a child and losing patience with her failure to perform correctly), Waugh demonstrates how the combination of the parent's unreasonable expectations and the child's inability to meet them accelerates into an abusive situation:

> It seems as if the father was the first to whip the child; he continued for twenty minutes … in a minute or two the whipping began again. This time it was the mother, a lady of no uncommon stature and strength, who wielded the whip; and blows and abuses, and little hysterical screams, continued until the whipping had lasted half an hour. Though the child was a girl-child of only three, the weapon used was not fit for the hide of a horse. She was set to write a copy; her eye black; her head bruised and aching; and the little hand that grasped the pen, swollen. (9)

In describing the abuse, Waugh is careful to include certain details: that both the mother and the father participate; that the instrument used and the length of the beating are incommensurate with the age of the child, or with the child's "offence"; and that the strength of the abusers is in great contrast to the stature of the little "girl-child." As well, the story clearly indicates throughout that the family is of a higher class, because Waugh mentions that the abuse had been seen and reported by servants within the home, and he observes at the end of the tale that "To persons in the position of the prisoners it must be an exceedingly painful thing to be placed on trial on such a charge" (10). Waugh's narrativization of this particular incident, then, serves to support and dramatize the conception of abuse put forward in "The Child of the English Savage": the abuse is irrational, the child is innocent, and the crime is unrelated to issues of class or poverty.

Although the abuse in this case is not the *result* of poverty, class is, nevertheless, an important issue in the narrative. The reason why the abuse that goes on in this home does not remain a secret, in spite of the fact that it is perpetrated, literally, behind closed doors – as Waugh observes, "the door was shut" and "the door was again closed" (9) throughout the child's beating – is because "some of the servants (five were kept) stood about the house listening, all too well knowing what was going to happen" (9). If the child's suffering in this home is known to the servants; however, it only becomes known to the public through the nurse alerting the police, and through the work of *The Child's Guardian*, both of which allow the courts (and the reading audience) to see what goes on in the secret places of this privileged home. At the end of the story, Waugh records that

> The Society pressed only the minor charge, believing that a conviction on that would be enough to prevent cruelty, not in this mansion alone, but in all where, through this case, it became known that even servants can bring punishment on gentlefolks' heads if they be cruel to a child. And in this aspect we wish the case to be widely known. (10)

If there is a moral to this story, it is that, where cruelty to children is concerned, knowledge is important, and once obtained and used, such knowledge can empower even "servants" to mete out justice to "gentlefolks." This narrative, therefore, is empowering, because it clearly delineates both what constitutes abuse and what can be done when abuse is witnessed or suspected.

Furthermore, the focus on the punishment to the upper-class parents, visited upon them on behalf of their little "girl-child," through the actions of their servants, suggests a leveling of authority: the witness (and, to a certain extent, the victim) is granted power and redress against the abuser through the action of the law, and through the work of the London SPCC. Just as the London SPCC's notices to audiences to "look out" for abuse while watching child performances transformed that passive audience into an active witness, so too does "The Story of the Shrewsbury Case" suggest that one can be empowered by knowledge, and transformed from helpless servant to active participant in justice. As Waugh notes of the primary witness in this case, "The nurse … Like most people who witness cruelties … scarcely knew what to do. But, at her wit's end, she conceived the idea of writing to the police" (9). The nurse, through being forced to

witness violence against her charge, is herself the victim of this act of violence. But by choosing to speak out, rather than silently suffer, she brings amelioration to the child, and, by association, to herself.

Through its investigative work and through the publication of its case studies, therefore, the London SPCC offered to give a kind of agency to those who witnessed acts of violence against children, and to recognize the action that, according to the opening editorial of *The Child's Guardian* in 1887, had already been taken by such witnesses: "Some specially gifted farmer compassionates a child on the high road, and stops it to talk; a suspicious school-mistress follows up the return 'Unwell' as the reason for an always poorly and timid-looking scholar; a kindly publican observes the little slave, night after night..." ("Untitled" 1-2). This description of child savers is all-inclusive, suggesting that every person, in every station, is capable of detecting and ameliorating cruelty to children. Although *The Child's Guardian* was geared towards informing the public as to how to address child suffering in its midst, however, it also sought to reach those believed to be ignorant of the reality of child suffering. For as Waugh claimed in the opening editorial of *The Child's Guardian* in 1888, entitled "Our New Year," "Our first work is to make a happily incredulous public know the existence, extent and horribleness of the hidden evils we have come into existence to destroy" (1). He continues by noting that the journal "shall try to annihilate the bliss of ignorance of any but [its readers'] own happy homes" (1), and that "In this country, at least, if children perish, it is for the lack of brave people's knowing about it" (2). Here, the claim made is not just that people in England do not know the law, but also that they do not realize that child abuse exists. The public is now constructed as "incredulous," suggesting that even when reports of child abuse are made known, they may not be believed. Child abuse is "hidden," and the work of the London SPCC becomes, as a result, revelatory, as opposed to strictly informative.

Whereas the public is constructed as "incredulous" in this editorial, the London SPCC is constructed as knowing, as having access to information unavailable to others. Waugh writes:

> We do not write these things without pain and tears. We send no thrill of horror abroad which we ourselves have not first felt. We are moved not

> by the poor inadequate words in which we try to convey our terrible facts, but by the presence of little frightened faces, hollow voices, timid habits, bandaged heads, bruised and blistered limbs .... We have sought by word sketches to convey sensations to our readers which small living children had first conveyed to us. (1)

Here, Waugh suggests that abuse narratives printed in *The Child's Guardian* consist merely of "poor inadequate words," of "sketches" that cannot hope to approximate the real "presence" of the abused child itself, or even the "terrible facts" of the cases. Waugh still argues that "Knowledge is the deliverer" (2), but the knowledge obtainable by the Society's reading audience is necessarily incomplete – the reader can feel only "sensations" that are already at a remove from the sensations directly experienced by the Society and its inspectors (both of which are themselves at a remove from the experiences of the abused child).

Waugh's profession of the inadequacy of language in this particular editorial, I would argue, marks the beginning of a shift in the London SPCC's rhetoric. By its second year of publication, *The Child's Guardian*'s target audience appeared to be those who were completely ignorant of the issues the London SPCC addressed, as opposed to those, like the servants in the "Shrewsbury Case," who were aware of abuse but not necessarily of the best way to address it. Such a shift, I would argue, was in part the effect of the Society's increased professionalization. At the beginning of 1888, when Waugh's article on "Our New Year" was published, the Society had only two inspectors, but by December of that same year, it had employed fifteen (Waugh, "Notes" CG 2:24, 119). And by April 1889, Waugh would argue that the Society's inspectors alone were qualified to investigate cases of abuse, claiming that "the police, however strong their human feeling, were never the agency for dealing with poor little starved and beaten children .... It is the work of altogether different men to decoy these broken little hearts into confidences, and get a story from small, pale, dying lips on which a Bench can convict their wrongdoers" ("The Police and Ill-Used Children" 53). This particular claim went beyond a frustration with the "inadequacy of words" in that it suggested that even the "languid little originals" ("Our New Year" 1) could be made to speak, to give a "story," only to the Society's own inspectors. What was required in order to address the

issues of abuse was no longer simply knowledge or good will, but instead, specialized knowledge, and specialized skill, which the London SPCC alone possessed.

Moreover, even before the abused child could be made to speak, it had to be identified, a task for which, Waugh suggested, the Society's inspectors were specifically trained. In an article entitled "No Cruelty Here" (a phrase that would become the future NSPCC's rallying cry), Waugh claimed that "but for us, the cruelties would have remained the mere secrets of homes" (4). These same cruelties went unnoticed by church and school board officials, Waugh suggests, because

> As the fly has many eyes, so has man; and which he sees with, depends on the main aim of his life. We all fall into limited habits of sight. This is the result of our particular vocation. With a new vocation, facts come to light which before had been as little noticed as they are now conspicuous ... We live to observe suspicious facts in child-life, to follow their lead, and to give days, if needs be, to the doing of it. (4)

The role of knowledge, here, is very different from that depicted, less than a year earlier, in the opening editorial of *The Child's Guardian* in 1887, in which the public already knew and recognized child abuse and simply required guidance as to "how to help." In "No Cruelty Here," published in 1888, it is the Society alone that is empowered to see, to recognize, and to address cases of abuse. Only the Society's inspectors follow the "vocation" that develops the particular "habits of sight" required for protective work, that makes "mute" children speak ("Our New Year" 1), and that gathers the "terrible facts" required to bring charges against abusers.

The shift in the Society's narrative of abuse from something that was known, yet not addressed, to something that it alone had the skills and abilities both to investigate and to ameliorate, can therefore be attributed to the Society's growing investment in its own methods. The construction of child abuse as secret and hidden shifted power away from the public and the police to the Society's own inspectors. Moreover, as much as *The Child's Guardian* served to educate the public about the problem of child abuse, it also, importantly, served as a platform in which to educate the public about the London SPCC. In "Then I'm Done For," published in July 1888, Waugh argued that increased

public knowledge of the London SPCC was, in fact, crucial in the fight against child abuse – not simply as a means of amelioration, but as a means of striking terror into the hearts of abusers. Waugh proclaims that "The terror which our name has already become among evil doers to little children, wherever it is known, lays upon our readers a grave responsibility. We need only to be present in every corner of the land – and we shall be there, and that at no distant day – to make injury to a child a hopeless affair" (57). The work of the reader, therefore, was no longer that of learning "how to help" abused children; or, to be more precise, the instructions on "how to help" had somewhat changed. Rather than providing his readers with "knowledge of the provisions of the law for children's protection" ("Untitled" 1), Waugh instead argued that "It is all vain to tell us that the law empowers the coroner to deal with [abusers]. What is needed is that our name be carried within sound of them, while the child still stands in the doorway or is shut away to languish on an attic floor; and that they should be made to understand its special meaning for them" ("Then I'm Done For" 58). Here, the law is depicted as insufficient and essentially useless – the child receives the benefit of the law only when it is already too late. It is therefore "vain" to invoke the law when dealing with such criminals; instead, it is the name of the London SPCC that must be made known and feared.

Although such a stance on the laws of England in regards to child protection might seem to contradict the initial claim of *The Child's Guardian* that its aim was to make its readers aware of the provisions of the law, such an aim seemed geared, even from the beginning, towards demonstrating the ways in which those laws were insufficient. Articles such as "Child Legislation of 1886," published in January, 1887, which argued that "the relief would have been more complete, but for the doctrinaires who cry out for 'rights' and 'liberties' (ever leaving out the consideration that helpless children have rights, that little human nature has liberties)" (Waugh 11), chronicled the weaknesses of current legislation in terms of providing protection to abused children. As well, Waugh was careful to point out cases in which the London SPCC was forced to break the law in its efforts to protect children. In a case from 1887, for example, after taking a "wretched girl" from the streets where she had been selling "little wares to maintain a drunken mother," the Society found itself "technically guilty of abduction and

detention" ("Notes" CG 1:3, 22). But, "happily the magistrate was not a mere legalist. He was a man besides. He refused the application, and pending the legal steps (which take time) for the removal of the child from her mother, confirmed our conduct, sent the tyrant away, and thanked the officer for his 'good work'" (22). Here, Waugh is careful to point out the difference between "mere legalism," the "technical" nature of the law, and the larger issues of justice with which the Society is concerned. That a parent could neglect and abuse her child, and yet have her rights to that child protected by the law, is representative of the need for legislative change. And while in this case the Society prevails, Waugh alerts the reader to the fact that it is only the manly righteousness of the magistrate that allows for such a happy conclusion. Stories such as this added weight to the Society's efforts throughout 1888 and 1889 to "obtain the passing of a Bill which shall restrict the powers of parents to make their young children slaves" ("The Morning Advertiser" 58).

Such a Bill was meant to address what the London SPCC saw as its greatest obstacle to combating cruelty to children: the power of the London SPCC to recognize abuse and to strike fear into abusers' hearts was weakened by the "powers of parents" protected by the law. Though cases of assault, such as that described in "The Story of the Shrewsbury Case," could and were dealt with through the courts, situations in which children worked in the street or went without proper food and clothing were far more difficult to address. Waugh's frustration with the Society's lack of power to enforce parental care is evident in his comment that "Of the seventy cases with which the London Society has had to deal, not one has it been able to lay hold of, on account of the perpetual weariness, sickness to death, scanty food and scanty dress, interminable hours and weary miles, which had made the child's street-life a horrible outrage" (Waugh, "Street Children" 830). The law protects not the child, in these cases, but the parent, for

> To send a child into the street with the order to sell one shilling's worth is lawful; and for a lawful purpose the father has the right of punishment. To enforce his authority it is legal for him to birch or to cane, as well as to curse liberally. And in a hundred thousand homes in England, this lawful chastisement is administered, doubly backed by the dictum of a Lord Chief Justice and by the High Court of Justice. (830)

Waugh's repetition of the "lawful," "legal" rights of the parents demonstrates why this particular article on "Street Children" was attached to the Society's Bill for new legislation in the summer of 1889. Only when those "legal" rights were restricted, such articles suggested, would the Society have the power to intervene, to be able to strike fear into the hearts of abusers.

This article also illustrates, however, the ways in which the Society began to subsume a number of social problems under the category of child abuse. Whereas the physical violence recounted within *The Child's Guardian* could be constructed as a hidden evil, the problem of children labouring in the streets or going without proper food and clothing was neither new nor hidden. By identifying street children as abused children, Waugh and the London SPCC essentially expanded their mandate from preventing cruelty to children, to enforcing what they perceived as proper parenting. The two were not, however, represented as separate problems. Instead, by identifying street children as abused children, the London SPCC supported their own claim to "see" abuse where others failed to find it; that is, though street children were in no way hidden, only the Society, it could claim, truly saw them for what they were – children who suffered cruelty through being forced to labour. This larger conception of child abuse is evident, as I noted in the introduction, in the final version of the Act for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, which, when passed on August 26th, 1889, allowed the law to intervene in any cases in which a person "assaults, ill-treats, neglects, abandons or exposes" (Hall, *The Law Relating to Children* 27-28) children.

In his article on the "Prevention of Cruelty to Children," published that same month, Waugh rejoiced that "all manner of new and necessary powers are in the hands of the British public for the putting down of evils which have been all too long the children's woe and the nation's shame" (133). A good portion of the article, however, was devoted to pointing out that "This law is for no borough, but for Great Britain and Ireland" (133). The importance of this point, for Waugh, was the justification it provided for the London SPCC's reconstitution as the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, which had occurred one month before. In "Prevention of Cruelty to Children," Waugh argues that the new legislation "is an embodiment of the large spirit of the Society that promoted it. That Society knows neither London children nor

Birmingham children, but only English children, and all of them" (133). By this logic, a national law required a national organization, and although Waugh suggests that this legislation empowered "the British public," his direct association of the new law with the new NSPCC – "The principle of the Society is right. It is right for legislation. It is right for administration. We are dealing with a national evil. As a nation we unite to protect our injured children" (133) – instead suggests that the most important aspect of the legislation is that it empowers the NSPCC. Furthermore, Waugh's proclamation that the NSPCC "knows … only English children, and all of them" speaks to the connection between knowledge and the centralization of power. Just as cruelty to children required those trained in specialized "habits of sight" to unearth it, so too did the nation's children require a unified, centralized, national organization fully to "know" and address their sufferings.

The reconstitution of the London SPCC as the NSPCC marks another significant shift in the Society's professionalization and rhetoric. The NSPCC argued that such a transformation from local to national satisfied purely practical demands upon child-protection work; in 1892, for example, in response to "a suggestion made by the Mayor [of Birmingham] to the effect that it would be better for Birmingham to stand alone with a separate society than to continue a part of the National Society" (NSPCC, "Our National Scheme" 6), the reply was that "If each large town stood alone, smaller towns and country districts, unable to support societies of their own, would receive no assistance; and the children in such districts would rarely benefit by the Act" (6). In other words, the centralization of the organization allowed wealthier districts to support smaller, poorer districts, and thus provided equal representation across England. The NSPCC also argued, however, that a uniformity of *method* in the investigation and prosecution of child abuse cases was necessary in order to combat the problem. While some in England might have argued that "the National Society's desire to cover the land with its agencies is of mere envy and ambition" (NSPCC, "The System of Dealing with the Suffering Child" 109), the NSPCC suggested that, in fact, other SPCC organizations which chose to remain separate from the NSPCC, such as the Birkenhead and Wirral SPCC and the Liverpool SPCC, were failing in their duties towards abused children. Articles such as "The National Society's Position in Liverpool," published in 1896,

argued that children in Liverpool were not receiving the full benefit of the new law, and cited as the reason "the difference between the methods employed by the Liverpool Society and the National Society" (NSPCC, "The National Society's Position in Liverpool" 35). When the NSPCC established its own committee in Liverpool, it "discovered" abuse that had gone unnoticed: "alas! a ghastly light is cast upon the neglect of neglected children which the Liverpool Society has unhappily practised in the years that are gone!" (35).

What abuse was found by the NSPCC that had gone "neglected" by the Liverpool SPCC is impossible to ascertain, but the differences between the numbers of cases undertaken by both organizations suggests that seeing abuse had as much to do with what one considered to be abuse as it did with uncovering unspeakable deeds done in darkness. The passage of the "Children's Charter" greatly expanded the definition of cruelty to children, and the NSPCC included a wide variety of categories within its own cases: "General Ill-treatment," "Assault," "Neglect and Starvation," "Abandonment and Exposure," "Begging Cases," "Dangerous Performances, etc.," "Immorality," and "Other Wrongs" (NSPCC, "Quarterly Return of the Society's Cases" 116). Obviously, such categories lent themselves to interpretation, and it is possible that the NSPCC's inspectors in Liverpool saw abuse where the Liverpool Society did not. This difference in what they saw could be true, particularly, if the Liverpool Society had stayed true to its original mandate of "moderation," in which that Society "endeavored 'to deal directly with the parents, and to reform the home rather than to punish the culprits'" (Behlmer 55). The smaller number of cases handled by the Liverpool SPCC might, therefore, speak to that Society's efforts to deal with situations of abuse in ways that avoided the legal system, rather than a general failure to see abuse or to seek it out. But within the NSPCC's discourse, that lower number of cases is an indictment against the Liverpool SPCC. The success of child protection according to the NSPCC, it would seem, lay in the numbers of cases of abuse found that resulted in either warnings or prosecutions.

The ways which the NSPCC constructed abuse can therefore be connected, at least in part, to the ways in which the organization understood itself in relation to the public. Initially, the London SPCC saw itself as an organization that would provide knowledge to the public, knowledge that would empower that public to address issues of

cruelty and abuse against children, which were already recognized, if unpunished, by English society. As the Society gained greater experience, and in particular, first-hand experience of child abuse cases, it increasingly portrayed child abuse as a secret, hidden crime, one that its own inspectors alone could access and bring to light. And when the Society reconstituted itself as a National organization, it argued that only its own inspectors and in particular, its own methods, could truly see an abused child for what it was. Truth and knowledge lay in the Society's casework, and in the facts revealed within it. Such casework was, of course, connected to the NSPCC's inspectorate, and in the NSPCC's training of these inspectors:

> As a great public institution [the NSPCC] always has many well-qualified men applying to it for posts as Inspectors, and from these it can pick out those who, after a searching examination, appear to be the fittest. These candidates then go through a course of training in the laws that affect children, and in the Society's principles and practice as regards dealing with cases. The consequence is that an Inspector of the NSPCC is a picked expert, thoroughly trained, and competent to carry out the work of the Society, a work that demands most careful and delicate handling. (NSPCC, "The System of Dealing with Suffering Children" 109)

Obviously, the trained and hand-picked cruelty man depicted here in 1896 provides a sharp contrast to the well-meaning and "specially gifted farmer" who helps an abused child in the opening editorial of *The Child's Guardian* in 1887. From a charity dedicated to educating the public about child abuse, the NSPCC had become a professional organization, devoted to its own "principles and practice" as the only means of carrying out its work. The public's role, in terms of such an organization, was only that of working to ensure the NSPCC's prosperity so that it could continue the work of finding abuse, even that which was "hidden" in plain sight.

NSPCC Casework and Propaganda

Such a transformation in the field of child protection, I would argue, had a significant effect upon the ways in which child abuse was understood, and on the ways in which information about child abuse was disseminated. As the NSPCC's caseload increased

throughout the 1890s, for example, and as the work of its propaganda shifted from informing the public to canvassing for public support, the abuse narratives recounted in *The Child's Guardian* began to change. Longer narratives such as "The Story of the Shrewsbury Case" appeared far less frequently, replaced instead with tables listing the "Month's Return of the Society's Cases" or with "Court Cases Proved True During the Last Recorded Month." These tables, which were devoted entirely to numbers, were sometimes followed by "Sample Cases" or "Courts and Children's Cases," in which abuse narratives appeared in greatly abbreviated forms. For example, one case from Rochester reads as follows:

> At the Rochester County Police Court, Henry Barrand and Marion Riley were indicted for neglecting their eight children .... It appeared that the man was in receipt of a regular wage of 21s. per week, and could afford to get drunk. The children were neglected, underfed, underclothed, and altogether in a very filthy condition. Inspector Cole proved having cautioned the defendants owing to their neglectful conduct to their children, whom he had found in a room almost without furniture or bedding, sleeping upon dirty rags .... The woman asked for time to get straight, which he granted her; but a month later the place and the children were in a worse state than before, some of them were breaking out in sores. The male defendant was found guilty and sentenced to two months' hard labour. The defendant Riley was sentenced to one month with hard labour. (NSPCC "Courts and Children's Cases" 65)

Unlike "The Story of the Shrewsbury Case," this case does not construct a "reality effect" in order to place the reader in the role of eye-witness. The only details provided are those needed to make the case: the family has sufficient money, the children are given insufficient care, and the defendants are punished according to the law. The home life is described only in ways that materially relate to the proceedings, such as the father's implied drunkenness, the mother's failure to address the children's needs, and the filthy conditions of the home, all of which serve to support the accusations of neglect and abuse. The children themselves are important only as evidence of their parents' abuse, as no mention is made about what happens to them once their parents are arrested.[6]

Therefore, the important aspect of this case, as suggested by its place within "Courts and Children's Cases," is the result: the parents are indicted, the case against them is "proved," and the sentences are handed down, all through the Society's efforts.

The difference between cases such as this and "The Story of the Shrewsbury Case" is, in essence, the "story." The Rochester case is not a "story" of abuse, it is a sample of the NSPCC's casework, and as such, it does not include the novelistic elements of the Shrewsbury case. It is not meant to create outrage, but to demonstrate efficiency, and as such, it relies less upon the reader's sympathy than on the reader's trust. Because the Society can see abuse where others cannot, and because the Society is trained to deal with offenders, its work on behalf of abused children is authoritative. Cases such as this from Rochester, therefore, are about demonstrating that the public can trust in that authority to do the work of "protecting" children, and to do it well. If information is missing, such as the relationship between the parents and the children, the reaction of the children to their parents' arrest, or even the whereabouts of the children after the arrest, its lack makes this information seem unessential – unrelated to the "facts" of the case and to its conclusion.

The alteration in the kinds of abuse narratives published in *The Child's Guardian* is tied, I would therefore argue, to a shift in genre from the case study to casework. The case study, as I have suggested, works to create bonds between the reader and the suffering subject, to make that suffering recognizable and real to those who have the power to ameliorate it. Casework, by comparison, represents the specific details and evidence required by a specific organization in order to achieve a specific task. The questions asked and the information gathered within casework are therefore limited: limited to what are considered to be the requisite questions, and the requisite information. Casework records an individual's entrance into a system already in place, and it operates on assumptions about what constitutes a problem, and how that problem should be addressed. It does not suggest amelioration; instead, it assumes that the means of amelioration are already in place. Where case studies and statistics rely upon "sympathy ready-made," therefore, casework relies upon authority ready-made. In its first few years, when it was still establishing itself, the London SPCC published cases such as "The Shrewsbury Case," which, though based on London SPCC casework, yet worked

within the residual genre of the case study. By the 1890s, however, the abuse narratives printed in *The Child's Guardian* are exemplary of casework: they record the "important" details of the case, the result, and nothing else.

Most histories of casework locate its origins in the nineteenth century with the Charity Organisation Society, which sought to "put charity on a scientific basis and remoralise the poor degraded by indiscriminate donations of cash and gifts" (Fido 208). Although the C.O.S. is credited with developing and refining casework, however, Behlmer argues that "in some respects the NSPCC was an even more thoroughgoing champion of the social casework method" (167). Behlmer supports this argument by focusing on the NSPCC's professionalization, stating that "Whereas the C.O.S. began formal training for home visitors in 1896, the NSPCC had adopted an intensive training course for its 'probationers' at least six years earlier. The C.O.S. employed a mixture of salaried and voluntary visitors; paid professionals investigated all of the NSPCC's cases (32,787 in 1901, as compared with 14,000 for the C.O.S.)" (Behlmer 167-8). This linkage between the development of a profession and the development of casework speaks to the importance of authority to this genre: whereas case studies such as those written by Mary Carpenter relied upon her personal authority and experience with juvenile delinquents, casework relies upon an institutional authority, one based on training, procedure, and method. And as the NSPCC's attacks on the Liverpool SPCC demonstrate, certain institutions could be vested with greater authority than others.

The NSPCC's casework was important, therefore, in providing evidence of the Society's skill and efficiency in dealing with cases of cruelty to children. Furthermore, with the Society's expansion throughout England, such evidence was crucial in terms of providing the NSPCC with the necessary financial support. Just how crucial the printed case studies were in terms of generating propaganda can be judged from the instruction in the Society's *Inspector's Directory* that "it is of great moment to the interest of the Committee, and to the help it may render to the funds of the Society, that the full and detailed facts of at least a selection of child sufferings in its locality should be brought before it" (NSPCC, *Inspector's Directory* 20). The inspectors' casepapers, providing as they did the raw material for the abuse narratives printed in *The Child's Guardian*, must be seen, therefore, not just as the administrative tools by which the NSPCC functioned,

nor even just as examples of what child abuse was, but also as the means by which the Society maintained public support.

Because the NSPCC's casepapers were the end result of a series of investigations, conversations, and interventions, however, the "sample cases" printed in *The Child's Guardian* demonstrated only a small portion of the actual work done by the Society. Tables and sample cases provided proof of the extent of the NSPCC's operations, but they failed to capture the labour, the minute details of investigation, that had gone into providing such information. The real work of addressing cruelty to children was therefore hidden from the public eye, and although this hidden work supported the NSPCC's sole authority, it was also a source of anxiety, because the Society felt that the extent of its work, and the expenses it entailed, were not fully comprehended by the public. Furthermore, while casework as a genre rests upon the authority of the institution that produces it, the NSPCC's authority, throughout the 1890s, was continually under attack. The NSPCC faced public opposition on a variety of points: opposition that argued that the Society targeted lower- and working-class families (Waugh, "The Rights of the Working Man" 81), that questioned the usefulness of the Society's work (Waugh, "Notes" CG 7:11, 149), and that suggested that the Society's publications were a waste a public funds (Waugh, "Notes" CG 10:4, 48 and CG 11:11, 129). The NSPCC's public failure to bring about legislation restricting child-life insurance, and the examination of its finances by the C.O.S. and by parliament, greatly detracted from the success the organization had enjoyed in its first few years. As a result, the NSPCC found itself trying to raise funds while also defending its own work.

What the Society needed was a visible demonstration of the good that it performed, evidence not just of the sheer numbers of cases it investigated, but of the transformation the Society could bring about in the lives of children. As Waugh lamented in response to the success of a benefit featuring Dr. Barnardo's children,

> Our own results … are not of a kind which can be made to appeal to the eye in the manner of those who can show their saved children in 'Homes' where their supporters may vividly realize the advantages of the work which they find the funds to accomplish. Our results are simply bones less sore, stomachs less empty, eye less frequently filled with tears, and limbs

> less naked. These are seen only by the eye to which all things are naked and open. In contented childhood, and in quieter homes are our chief, almost our only, rewards. Fancy must picture them, and sympathy realize what all this means. ("Notes" CG 4:7, 80)

This complaint speaks to the drawback of the Society's claim that it alone could see and comprehend child abuse and its effects. While such a claim supported the NSPCC's authority, it also meant that the Society could not fully make visible either the conditions of child suffering, or the results of the NSPCC's labour. And without the ability to make its supporters "vividly realize" its work, the NSPCC was at a disadvantage in the charitable arena. While "fancy" and "sympathy," awakened by the London SPCC's horrific narratives of abuse in the late 1880s, had been enough to raise public support for the criminalization of child abuse, the NSPCC required something quite different to support its new role as enforcer. What it required was evidence: evidence such as that provided by its casework, but which made the beneficial results of that work both visible and emotionally engaging.

One propaganda technique employed by the NSPCC in its early years in an attempt to provide this visual proof was that of "before and after" photography. By presenting the public with actual images of abused children and with positive visible results of the NSPCC's intervention, such photographs could provide convincing proof of the benefit of the Society's work. The response to one of the earlier attempts at this kind of documentary evidence, however, was not entirely supportive. In complementary images of a young boy "as he was found" and "two years later" (Figure 1), the NSPCC found as shocking a spectacle of its work as could be desired. But images such as this – which were used on subscription cards for *The Child's Guardian* and were presented to the Society's members and the public at the Society's 7th AGM – were met with some skepticism. As Waugh angrily remarked in the "Notes" section of the June, 1891 issue of *The Child's Guardian*, "[one member] thought the report of the Society was 'sensational,' because it contained some photographs of children, emaciated as they were found, and the same children, as he somewhat unhappily described them, 'fattened up' … The remark was largely quoted, and will do its measure of harm" ("Notes" CG 5:6, 58). Waugh's focus on the "harm" this comment will cause suggests that he was only too

aware of the trouble Dr. Barnardo faced with his own "before and after" photographs. A famous Victorian child-saver, known for his "philanthropic abductions," his homes for children, and his "before and after" cards which he used to fund his endeavours, Dr. Barnardo faced charges after complaints were made that he had staged his photographs for dramatic effect.[7]

Waugh's focus on the accusation of sensationalism, however, also speaks to his anxiety about the gap between what the Society witnessed in its encounters with abused children and what could be made visible and known to the public. For he goes on to ask, "what better means can we employ to inspire men and women to support us, who cannot see what we see, than to give them at least some picture glimpse of it?" (58). This statement is revealing, in that it shows Waugh's desire to both reveal aspects of the Society's work to the public, and to safeguard the primacy of the NSPCC's vision. For Waugh, these pictures are only "the next best thing" for those "who cannot see what we see." They do not provide hard evidence of the true nature of the Society's work, which is always more than can be made visible in a photograph or in a published case study, but instead only "some picture glimpse of it." In so saying, Waugh downplays the photographs as documentary proof, presenting them instead as the means to "inspire" public support. But as long as photographs such as this were perceived to be sensational, they would fail to provide the kind of support the NSPCC required.

The Society did, however, find a more suitable avenue both for visual representation and for obtaining funds with the formation of its Children's League of Pity in December 1891. In *The Child's Guardian*, Waugh wrote that "we now seek to organize a League of England's happier children, and offer them the means to help in the blessed work of rescue" ("The Children's League of Pity" 130). The goal of these "happier children," or "Leaguers" as they came to be called, was to raise funds for the Society through canvassing amongst their friends and family, and, as previously discussed, through staging performances, such as plays or tableaux. Although Waugh argued that children should join the League for their own sakes – as "to go on merely enjoying yourself when you have pitied miseries which you might make less or, perhaps, altogether stop, is to be a party to them" – he was also refreshingly blunt about what he wanted Leaguers to do: "You are asked to get money and to give it, because it costs

money, a great deal of money, to make people do right .... It is good to be a happy child, but it is bad to be a selfish one" (130). Waugh's focus on the League's benefit to the "happier children" of England – in offering them "the means to help," and in saving them from being a party to child abuse through their own ignorance – makes its formation appear as a continuation of the NSPCC's work on behalf of children, but its role in creating new opportunities for fund-raising was undoubtedly the League's primary purpose.

With the League, the NSPCC found an audience to whom the hidden aspect of abuse was unproblematic, for as Waugh vowed to the Leaguers' parents, "nothing horrible shall be told them, nothing that can sully their innocence" (130). In *The Child's Guardian*, the NSPCC struggled to negotiate between the need, on the one hand, to present its inspectors' vision as specialized and therefore authoritative, and on the other, to present moving depictions of abuse that would not appear "sensational." But what had been with the NSPCC's adult audience a problematic question of representation, became, within the parameters of the League of Pity, a natural and beneficial form of censorship. The NSPCC, according to Waugh's logic, could not show child abuse as in itself it really was because to do so would be to abuse the children who sought to support that work. If representations of abuse within the context of the League of Pity failed to provide a full and complete picture of cruelty to children in England, they could be seen to do so as a result of the restrictions in place for the benefit of children. Therefore, with the founding of the League's own journal, *The Children's League of Pity Paper*, the NSPCC found an audience for somewhat different representations of abuse than had appeared in *The Child's Guardian*. Because the editor, Mary Bolton, owned a camera, and perhaps in part as an appeal to its younger audience, this journal was fully illustrated. Illustrations such as those of the boy "as he was found," however, were out of the question, as the graphic nature of these photographs might "sully the innocence" of the reader. The photographs published in *The Children's League of Pity*, therefore, did not depict horrific cases of physical cruelty, but instead focused on neglect. The physically-abused child of the "English savage" that had been ubiquitous in the case studies and journal articles of the London SPCC's early years was replaced by the sad and neglected child, the only abused child appropriate for a child audience.

One example of a "before and after" photograph in *The Children's League of Pity Paper*, "Maud and Albert" (Figures 2 and 3), while closely resembling the style of the image of the boy "as he was found" (Figure 1), also displays significant differences. As with the boy "as he was found" and "two years later," the images of Maud and Albert show the positive effects of NSPCC intervention, with a clearly indicated timeline demonstrating the effectiveness of the organization in transforming abused children into happy, healthy specimens of childhood. However, with "Maud and Albert" the time required for such a transformation is considerably contracted. In the "before" photographs, we are presented with Maud and Albert on May 29th, 1896, presumably very soon after they were apprehended from their home. The "after" photographs, taken on June 29th, 1896, show the two children smiling into the camera. The compacted timeline in this set of photographs as compared to that of the boy "as he was found" suggests that the abuse suffered by these children is less onerous to overcome: within a month, Maud and Albert are not only saved, but also completely recovered. Mary Bolton's commentary on these particular images supports this interpretation:

> On Friday, May 29th, 1896, the sad photographs of these children were taken. On Monday, June 29th, 1896 – one month after the other photographs were taken, what a change! and all brought about by happiness. Until May 29th they were no longer miserable, no longer unloved, no longer starved, and here you see them as they are! (Bolton, "Maud and Albert" 13).

Whereas the horrific cases of abuse related in *The Child's Guardian* had led some to greet with skepticism an image which demonstrated a child's transformation within a space of two years, because *The Children's League of Pity Paper* depicts child abuse as an absence of happiness, love, and comfort, abuse is represented as something that can be overcome simply through the "love" of the child audience.

Although the NSPCC's focus, in *The Children's League of Pity Paper*, on neglected and "unhappy" children allowed the Society to avoid narratives or images of brutally-beaten children, such a focus also produced images that relied upon residual conceptions of endangered childhood as the means of making abuse visible. Photographs in *The Children's League of Pity Paper* often, that is, make reference to poverty as that

which separates a "before" child from an "after" child. For example, "A Little Northampton Girl You Have Helped" (Figure 4) pictures a girl standing before a brick wall dressed in ragged, ill-fitting clothing, with one hand holding a bottle and the other extended palm out. By contrast, in her "after" state, the girl stands dressed in a proper suit and hat inside a well-furnished room, her hand resting on a table. There is no record of the time it took for this transformation to occur; instead, underneath the photographs are the captions "unloved," followed by "loved." These photos of the "Little Northampton Girl" make visible the extent to which "proper" childhood had become entirely associated with middle-class childhood. The girl in the "before" picture is obviously a lower-class child; in the "after" picture, she has been both saved, and transformed into a middle-class child. Poverty, in these photographs, is elided with abuse, but it is also associated visually with a lack of affection. A child that had to work, that was dressed poorly, or that spent time in the street was an "unloved" child, an abused child, while a middle-class child was "loved" and cared for.

The elision of poverty with abuse seen in this and other photographs (Figure 5) was, obviously, very much in opposition to the NSPCC's definition of cruelty to children as a crime that could occur in every home in every class. Such a contradiction between the Society's stated position on child abuse and the visual evidence provided in the League's journal could be explained away as a problem of representation. That is, just as Waugh argued that the image of the boy "as he was found" was just a "picture glimpse" of a reality that only the NSPCC itself could truly see, so too could one argue that the use of clothing and setting to represent abuse in the photographs in *The Children's League of Pity Paper* speak to the inability of the editor to use more graphic depictions of violence. The reliance on images of poor children as subjects of cruelty and abuse, however, also demonstrates a willingness on the part of the NSPCC to make a child's poverty function as a sign of its parent's criminality.

Furthermore, such representations of abused children as poor children also speak to an assumption about a relationship between poverty and abuse that operated not only in photographs such as these, but in the formation of the League itself. If abused children were constructed as sad and unloved, that is, the Leaguers were continually reminded that

they themselves were loved, cared for, and privileged. In her opening editorial, for example, Mary Bolton explained that

> In this League we seek the help of well-to-do and happy children in the cause of those who are sorrowful and suffering … we need all the help which kind-hearted and unselfish young folks can give us to make all the homes in the country, where little children are unblessed by love … as happy as the homes of those who join our Children's League of Pity. (Bolton, "The Children's League" 1)

As saving children was "a costly thing" (1), it made sense that the Leaguers be "well-to-do," particularly since they were required to pay for their membership and to collect donations only among their friends and relations (lest the NSPCC be accused of sending out the Leaguers to be hawkers and vagrants). However, Bolton's inclusion of "well-to-do" in her description of the ideal Leaguer also adds a class element to the contrast implicitly being constructed between the Leaguers and the children they are meant to save. The Leaguers are "happy," while the abused children are "sorrowful and suffering;" the Leaguers come from happy homes, while the abused children are "unblessed by love;" and, her comparison suggests, the Leaguers are "well-to-do," while the abused children, it seems, are not.

This comparison between the Leaguers and the abused children they were enlisted to help is continually stressed by Bolton. For example, in an article entitled "A Change Indeed," the reader's attention is drawn to a photograph of four children, dressed in frocks and hats, with one holding a large doll. Bolton instructs that this picture "should delight all Leaguers who want to see something of the good they are able to do by their pity for suffering children" ("A Change Indeed" 56-7), then goes on to describe the children as they were found: "They were terribly neglected – oh so dirty, with a dirtiness Members of the League we hope will never even be able to imagine. They had little or no clothing, and were hungry and wretched; and yet see them now" (56). In describing these children's "before" state, Bolton is careful to stress that this "poor, miserable, dirty, half-starved family" (56) is not something that the Leaguers themselves can understand or even imagine. And yet, through the help of the Leaguers and the NSPCC, the family now look "as though they might be going to a Sunday school excursion, so fine [are] they" (57). These children, therefore, have undergone a "change indeed." Not only have

they been rescued from some unspecified form of abuse, but they have also been elevated – transformed from dirty, poor children into proper, respectable children.

What is fascinating about the "before and after" photographs in *The Children's League of Pity Paper* is that representations of child abuse, constructed in such a way as to protect the child audience, in fact reveal the extent to which class had become a significant issue in the NSPCC's work. Because the NSPCC could not utilize more graphic images in this children's journal, it drew photographs from the category of abuse that made up the majority of its cases: that of "Neglect and Starvation." [8] Cases of "Neglect and Starvation" significantly outnumbered cases of "Assault" or "General Ill-Treatment" in those examined or prosecuted by the NSPCC, and while deliberate "Neglect and Starvation" could certainly be understood to be as savage and pathological a crime as "Assault," it is also true that it was a crime that lower-class families were more likely to commit. For example, the short write-ups of casework that appeared under the headings of "Sample Cases" include many cases of impoverished parents tried for "cruelty" to their starving children. One case from 1895 relates the story of " William Masters, a labourer, and his wife Sarah, [who] were summoned at the Faversham Petty Sessions with having wilfully neglected their five children" (NSPCC, "Courts and Children's Cases," 64):

> The insufficiency of food and clothing, the filth and misery of the place, were all more keenly felt by reason of the cold severity of the weather. Stockingless, hungry, and almost naked, with the thermometer at zero! The man had been earning for the past six months an average wage of 13s. a week, but small as it was he should have applied for relief from the Guardian. The Bench came to the conclusion that both husband and wife were equally responsible for the neglect, and the defendants were sentenced to one month's imprisonment. (64)

These parents are not the "English savages" Waugh and Manning had castigated in the early years of the London SPCC: they do not "wreak their strength and their wickedness, without remorse or pity, upon innocent and defenceless childhood" (Waugh and Manning 688). This is a family on the brink of starvation, and the "wilful neglect" of the parents is a result of the parents' failure to appeal to the Guardian for help. What is not mentioned in this case is that England was at this time suffering from an economic depression, and

that families such as this could be found throughout the country. Forced to use photographs from the less "sensational" end of the spectrum of crimes labeled "cruelty to children," the NSPCC actually provided, in *The Children's League of Pity Paper*, representations of abuse that more accurately depicted the nature of its work, than did early works such as "The Child of the English Savage." And what the "before and after" photographs demonstrated was that despite the NSPCC's claim to privileged sight in matters of child abuse, it saw endangered children where they had been seen by many others throughout the nineteenth century: among the ranks of the poor.

In *Child Welfare: Historical Dimensions, Contemporary Debates*, Harry Hendrick argues that whereas Behlmer attributes the shift in the NSPCC's emphasis from cruelty to neglect to "the increasing professionalism of the Society as it grew more sophisticated in discovering less observable and less dramatic forms of abuse," the shift might also be explained by the fact that "neglect was easier to 'treat' as a social problem than was cruelty" (30). That is, while Behlmer takes at face value the NSPCC's claim of privileged sight that allowed it to see abuse where others did not, Hendrick argues that "The Society came to feel that neglect, which referred to the absence of adequate food, shelter, health, clothes and supervision, could best be dealt with through the inculcation of a sense of personal responsibility on the part of the parents" (30). In shifting its focus from cruelty to neglect, the NSPCC was representative of the transformation in social welfare strategy from criminalization and punishment to reform and rehabilitation (32). Rather than depicting the abusive parent as an irredeemable savage, then, the Society instead suggested that abusive parents were "temporarily deviant and subject to the 'rehabilitative' ideal" (Hendrick 32).

While I essentially agree with Hendrick's argument, I would argue further that the NSPCC's increased focus on neglect also speaks to the difficulty the Society (and the English public) faced in leaving behind residual constructions of endangered childhood when undertaking the project of "creating" child abuse as a new kind of criminality. Throughout the nineteenth century, children of the lower and working classes had been the object of philanthropic, legal, religious, and social concern: whether working in the mines or factories, begging on the streets, starving in the home, or committing crimes, poor children were seen as both endangered and as a danger to the nation as a whole. In

its efforts to define cruelty to children as a criminal act, the NSPCC successfully demonstrated that abuse could be present in the ranks of the wealthy as well as the poor, and in its prosecutions showed itself willing to take on parents of all classes. But in identifying starvation and neglect as acts of cruelty, the NSPCC failed to acknowledge the extent to which a lower social status or financial need could effect the ways in which a child might live. Or, to be more specific, by assuming an idealized middle-class version of childhood to be the "proper" form of childhood, the NSPCC effectively criminalized lower- and working-class families who failed to follow that model. The NSPCC's conception of abuse was, of course, never "classless"; instead, it relied upon naturalized assumptions about and constructions of childhood, which never accounted for the very real differences in the lives and circumstances of families in different economic situations. By suggesting that the NSPCC was interested in neglect as part of a "prevailing middle-class critique" of the "social failure of the poor" (30), then, Hendrick underestimates the extent to which ideological constructions of childhood could allow the NSPCC to continue to believe that its work was "classless" even while it primarily investigated the homes of the poor.

There is a significant overlap, therefore, between the work undertaken by the NSPCC and earlier interventions into the home life of lower-class families. What is different, however, is that the development of child-protection as a profession limited the ways in which child endangerment could be understood. After surviving both controversy and debt in the early 1890s, the NSPCC emerged with a Royal Charter (granted on May 28th, 1895), solidifying its position in English society and supporting its authority to intervene in the home. Furthermore, connecting its work to the Queen's reign, as did William Clarke Hall in *The Queen's Reign for Children*, placed the NSPCC as the descendant of a century's work on behalf of children. The Society is more than inheritor, however, in histories such as Hall's, in that it alone addresses that which made the child a victim to all dangers – that is, the relationship between the child and the parent. Enforce "proper" parenting, and the child will be protected from work, from starvation, from improper housing. By placing itself in the position of "regulating" that relationship, therefore, the Society effectively made child protection the definitive answer to all forms of child endangerment. Moreover, it made casework the authoritative genre

for addressing that endangerment; Hall argues that the Society's authority rests upon the fact that it "immerses itself in the actual conditions of child-life, collect facts, classifies them, deduces from them, and prepares proposals which nobody else is preparing or could prepare" (164). By the end of the nineteenth century, representing and protecting the endangered child became the purview of those who collected and controlled information about the child, because it was only through that information, the NSPCC and its supporters suggested, that the child could be seen, understood, and aided.

However, by the late 1890s, the NSPCC also understood that such information had to be made accessible to the public in order to generate the financial support the Society's position as a private charity demanded. Short samples of the NSPCC's casework and lists of statistics were not sufficient proof of the benefit the Society's work provided to the public. Taking its cue, perhaps, from the success of *The Children's League of Pity Paper*, the NSPCC began to focus on the brighter aspects of its work, making clear the ways in which the Society had brought about happy transformations in formerly abusive homes. An article printed in *The Child's Guardian* in 1898, for example, entitled, "A Sample of How our Inspectors Work: From the *South Wales Daily News*" depicts the "residence of Inspector New, the Inspector of the Cardiff Branch of the Society," suggesting that "any one of the few" detractors of the NSPCC would, upon being present in this residence on Christmas, "have had to admit he was wrong in his opposition" (21). Pointing to two little children, the Inspector describes his dealings with the family:

> Their parents live at Penarth, and when some time ago I visited the house its condition was execrable. The parents each got a month. Now that home is a revelation. There is plenty of furniture, and the children are well fed and cared for. The husband has become a total abstainer and is in regular work – the husband of a sober wife, and the father of happy, healthy children. Do you know that that man thanked me, actually thanked me, for having got him sent to prison? (21)

Though the Inspector's reformation of these parents has undoubtedly been brought about through the collection, classification, and deduction of facts that Hall applauds as the basis of the Society's power and authority in the field of child protection, yet the

narrative here very much resembles that of "Maud and Albert" in *The Children's League of Pity Paper*. Surrounded as Inspector New is by "the patter of tiny feet," at the "merry evening" he has devised for the children's enjoyment, one could be moved to believe that the alteration brought about in these children's lives, like that of Maud and Albert, is "all brought about by happiness" (Bolton, "Maud and Albert" 13). Another case, from 1901, tells the story of

> a blacksmith against whom, after warnings, the Society took proceedings .... When, after some months, the Society looked him up, he was found in the country, earning less wages than he had had, but spending none of them in drink. His wife was reunited to him, his children were no longer frightened of him, no longer ill-nourished and ill-clothed, but comfortable and happy. His wife said: 'It's all due to the Society,' and the man out of gratitude gave, in the form of a donation to the Society, £1 15s. 0d., the costs of the proceedings it had taken against him. (Waugh, "Notes" CG 15:9, 107)

In both these cases, the parents feel gratitude for the actions taken against them, and the children are "cared for," "comfortable," and "happy," with the implication, of course, that they could always have been this happy had their parents only taken proper responsibility for their children. But it is only "due to the Society" that they have done so.

The minute details of how such transformations came to be achieved, in narratives such as this, are not important. That these parents were cruel to their children is evident from the description of the children as "ill-nourished and ill-clothed," and that the Society succeeded in ameliorating this problem is evident in the post-intervention happiness of the homes. The "letter and spirit of [the Society's] instructions" as to such matters (Waugh, "Notes" CG 15:4, 43) were applicable only to the Inspector, to whom "even the minutest detail" (43) of such instructions was important. But as long as the end result was either grateful parents, or exhibitions of "happy children" ("Notes" 13:1, 7), it seems that the public, like the child readers of *The Children's League of Pity Paper*, did not need to know the specifics. What they did require, it would seem, was a story – a story that made the Society's statistics more meaningful, that provided closure to narratives of broken families and damaged children. Success stories such as these, I would argue,

served to defend both the NSPCC's work, and the supremacy of its vision. They demonstrated that homes could be reformed through the Society's intervention, and because they were told from the point of view of the inspector, they supported the Society's authority. By the end of the nineteenth century, the story of the abused child had become, in many ways, the story of an institution, and of its inspectors.

Notes

[1] Most notably, Charles Dickens, who mocks the Victorian fascination with statistics through the character of Mr. Gradgrind in *Hard Times*.

[2] As Laura Berry notes,

> The 1839 Custody of Infants Act allowed a wife who was separated from her husband to petition the court and, provided she was of good character, to gain access to her young children and, potentially (although it was unlikely), temporary custody of children under seven years of age. The 1873 Custody of Infants Act permitted the mother to ask for access to, and in certain instances, custody of, her children up to sixteen years of age. Neither of these reforms actually transferred the right of custody to the mother. The 1886 Guardianship of Infants Act for the first time appointed a mother guardian upon a father's death, provided there was no question regarding her suitability. (Prior to this act, a father could transfer his custodial rights to anyone regardless of a mother's wishes.) The 1886 legislation left untouched the father's right of custody unless misconduct on his part was alleged, in which instance a mother could sue for full custody of her child .... It was not until the 1925 revision of the Guardianship of Infants Act that the child's welfare took full precedence over the parent's right. (99-100)

[3] "Recent Events" (CG 1:10, 73-74) reports a case involving a four-month old baby who had been brought into the London SPCC's shelter by a neighbour, after having been abandoned by its mother. "A Look Behind and Before" (4:1, 1) reflects on the changes wrought by the passage of the "Children's Charter" in 1889.

[4] "The Cromford Case" relates the story of "Mrs. Clay, wife of William Caly, M. R. C. V. S., of Cromford" who was charged with assaulting her child. (CG 2:14, 9-10). According to the report, "There were other children in the family: they were well treated" (9).

[5] "The Press on our Work," for example, quotes from the *Daily News*, the *Saturday Review*, the *St. James Gazette*, and the *City Press*, all of which laud the work of the London SPCC. One excerpt from *The Spectator* proclaims that "the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children is doing, we have reason to know, a good and great work in a sober and cautious spirit" (CG 2:14, 10).

[6] The NSPCC rarely mentions, in cases reported in *The Child's Guardian*, what happened to children who were apprehended from their homes. In its early years, the London SPCC ran a temporary shelter for children at its Harpur Street address. As well, it is evident from various "Notes" in *The Child's Guardian* that children apprehended by the Society had either been placed in "homes" (for example, CG 2:13, 1887), or had emigrated (CG 3:26, 26). For the most part, however, such information is not recorded in *The Children's Guardian*. Behlmer, however, records that "Even when jailed for severe neglect or assault, offenders usually returned to their young" (175). Furthermore, he notes that

> Of the 754,732 children on whose behalf the society intervened between mid-1889 and mid-1903, only 1,200 – far less than 1 percent – were removed from parental custody. Magistrates placed a few of these children with relatives, but sent most on to orphanages, industrial schools, and, as a last resort, workhouses. (175)

[7] Dr. Barnardo was very well known for his "before and after" photographs, and "from about 1870 Barnardo commissioned a photographer to take pictures of children admitted to his homes. About eighty of them were published, some in pamphlets, others pasted on to complementary pairs of cards showing the same boys, allegedly at the point of admittance, and later in the same day" (Smith 34). However, these photographs led to accusations that Barnardo had deceived the public, as parents of the children photographed complained that their children had been dressed in rags and shown performing occupations in which they had never been engaged (such as street-peddling).

[8] As mentioned, various categories, such as "General Ill-Treatment," "Assault," "Neglect and Starvation," "Abandonment and Exposure," "Begging Cases," "Dangerous Performances," "Immorality," and "Other Wrongs," were used to demonstrate the kinds of cases in which the NSPCC was involved. Of a total of 678 cases in the "Quarterly Return of the Society's Cases" in 1891, 16 are of "Assault," 59 of "Immorality," and 166 of "General Ill-Treatment." But by far, the largest number of cases fall into "Neglect and Starvation," which at 341 cases, makes up more than half of the Society's work in this period (NSPCC, "Quarterly Return of the Society's Cases," 116).

Conclusion
Inspector Stories: The *Inspector's Directory* and *The Cruelty Man*

In this study, I have examined representations and narratives of the endangered and abused child in the nineteenth century. By the beginning of the twentieth century, I would argue, the story of the endangered child had become the story of the child as institutional subject: of the child represented and caught up within, and finding amelioration as a result of, institutions such as the NSPCC, and legislation such as the "Children's Charter." As Laura Berry argues, "it might be said that, at about the time of the passage of the Elementary Education Act, the story of the child in danger was deployed in a more narrow sphere and toward more narrow and explicitly ideological (and state-sanctioned) ends" (164). In this new "state-sanctioned" narrative of the endangered child, I believe that the child is no longer, necessarily, the central figure. Instead, its story comes to be shared with newly emergent figures, the most important of which, I would like to suggest, is the Inspector.

Although Benjamin Waugh had been the defining figure of the NSPCC throughout the 90s, by 1904 he was forced to take an extended leave for health reasons, and by 1905, he had resigned his position (Behlmer 207). Robert J. Parr, who, according to Behlmer, "relied more heavily on precision than on emotion," was appointed to head the NSPCC, and a result, "the tone of the Society's propaganda … softened from acerbic to merely assertive" (27). Benjamin Waugh's fiery, if somewhat controversial, style had been the voice of the NSPCC throughout the 90s, and with his passage and the appointment of Parr, the tone of the NSPCC's propaganda became far more institutional, and far less individualistic. But if the voice and tone of *The Child's Guardian* became less personal, its institutional rhetoric was balanced by the emergence of the individual Inspector as the "face" of the NSPCC. As noted in the previous chapter, the figure of the Inspector had gained prominence in NSPCC narratives by the end of the nineteenth century; whereas early NSPCC casework had focused solely on the Inspector's role in finding abuse and bringing about punishment, by the end of the century, the NSPCC began to focus much more closely upon the positive changes brought about in abusive homes through the intervention of NSPCC "cruelty men."[1] In stories such as that of Inspector New and his Christmas gathering, and in twentieth-century texts such as *The*

Cruelty Man: Actual Experiences of an Inspector of the N.S.P.C.C. Graphically Told by Himself (1912), the Inspector emerged as a fully-developed character in NSPCC propaganda, and in the emergent narrative of the child and the state.

There is much to suggest that the Society's inspectors did, in fact, play a significant role in the organization, particularly in terms of the NSPCC's changing construction of child abuse. For example, the Society's *Inspector's Directory* of 1901 clearly indicates the extent to which the inspectors' first-hand experiences were taken into account in the lobbying for new legislation:

> If you want to learn what can be got out of an Act of Parliament, you must give yourself no rest till you learn what is necessary to get out of it for the child's sake .... If you can in no way get it out, then make a note of the fact and why it is so, and the suffering the child has endured in consequence, with a view to amending the Act when the opportunity comes, remembering that the Act was made for the child, not the child for the Act. (7-8)

These instructions empower the Inspector not just to make the law work for him and his charges, but also to use his experiences in the field to influence future legislation. Therefore, if the first "Children's Charter" had been brought about, in large part, through the work of Benjamin Waugh and *The Child's Guardian*, instructions such as these in the *Inspector's Directory* suggest that the following Prevention of Cruelty to Children Acts (in 1894 and 1904) can be attributed, as least as much, to the Society's inspectors, and to the casework they meticulously prepared. And what these Acts demonstrate, particularly that of 1894, is that the NSPCC, no doubt as a result of its inspectors' experiences, had moved away from its definition of child abuse as a classless crime motivated solely by pathological impulses, to a recognition of the role that environment could play in the endangerment of children. According to Behlmer, "If the Children's Charter made cruelty to the young a crime, the 1894 Act established it as a positively hazardous practice" (159), and the sweeping provisions of the Act, and the relative ease with which it was passed, demonstrate the extent to which the NSPCC had succeeded in making its case for legislation against cruelty to children. Under this Act, parents could receive a prison sentence of up to six months; "habitual drunkards" who abused or neglected their

children had to consent to treatment; parents were required to call a doctor when a child was ill; and workhouses were compelled to accept children of parents who could not afford to care for them (Behlmer 159). The provisions relating to parental drunkenness and to the greater responsibility of the workhouse in relieving poor parents of responsibility for starving children speak to the fact that the Society's own statistics made it "increasingly difficult to deny that poverty was a strong contributory factor" to child abuse and neglect (Behlmer).

If it is true that the NSPCC's inspectors, and the information they provided from their investigations, played a significant role in changing the Society's conception of abuse, it is also nevertheless true that the Inspector was, like the concept of cruelty to children and the abused child, "created." That is, the Inspector was both an important player in the NSPCC as an institution, and a symbolic construction of NSPCC propaganda. The "cruelty man" of NSPCC rhetoric serves a very specific purpose: that of embodying the Society's ideology and method, and of presenting an individual (yet always consistent) "face" to the public, thus depicting the NSPCC's delicate interventions into the home as far less intrusive. The Inspector as NSPCC employee, and the Inspector as NSPCC representative, however, always overlapped, and texts such as the *Inspector's Directory* and memoirs such as *The Cruelty Man*, sought to demonstrate the ways in which the two could not be separated. The individual Inspector, in these texts, is distinguished by his discipline, by his adherence to a particular "type" that had come to define the NSPCC as an institution, and Inspector stories vividly realize the Society's interactions with children, with parents, and with the law. Representations of the Inspector clearly demonstrate, therefore, both the ways in which the Society perceived itself, and the ways in which it wished to be perceived by the public.

Furthermore, such narratives added an important character to narratives of child endangerment. While stories of child peril throughout the nineteenth century might have included characters who "saved" the endangered child, such as the Cheerybles in Dickens's *Nicholas Nickleby*, such benefactors often seem to belong more to the realm of fairy tales than of real life. More often than not, the endangered child of Victorian fiction has no benefactor, and it is its loneliness and isolation that makes this child speak all the more loudly to the ills of society and the wrongs of childhood. With the emergence of

the NSPCC and, in particular, with the social acceptance of the project of child protection in the early twentieth century, these wrongs began to be represented as in the process of being righted, and the figure who would right the child's wrongs, and intervene to protect and save it, was the cruelty man.

The NSPCC was very careful about who it picked to be an inspector. According to Behlmer, "For its community militia the NSPCC preferred men who had been trained to follow orders" (162). Drawing from the NSPCC *Record Book of Inspectors* (1889-1910), Behlmer records that the great majority of cruelty men were policemen before taking up their posts with the Society (163). Furthermore, "When the Society found a promising 'children's servant,' it subjected him to a rigorous training in law and public relations" (164). The 1901 *Inspector's Directory* includes detailed instructions on every aspect of the inspector's life and work, including his life insurance, his uniform, and his "removal expenses" (14-15). It provides information on how to go about collecting and writing up witness statements (36-37), how to photograph children (27), what kind of action to take on complaints (29-30), and when to talk to the press (never). But perhaps more importantly, in a section entitled the "Inspector's Habit of Mind," the inspector was instructed as to what kind of man he had to be in order to carry out his work. This section includes such subjects as "What Eyes should see," "What a Child knows," "What it Means," and "Why it did Things," all of which detail the "habit of mind" needed in order to discover cruelty towards and abuse of children. For example, the section entitled, "A Traitor's Ways," clearly demarcates the difference between a "cruelty man" and a mere hired investigator:

> The way for a man employed by this Society to be a traitor to a child is *not* to give his heart to the child. When a child's pains are not his, he abandons hope of delivering it .... No genuine pain is felt by heartless men at having to give up a case. It makes no impression on them. Not having an interest in improving an unhappy child's condition, they have no disappointment in failure. They are "hirelings, whose own the sheep are not." (8-9 original italics)

If the abused child is defined by its innocence and helplessness, the cruelty man is constituted by his love for that child. Those who see their work for the Society merely as

work are "traitors," "hirelings," and "heartless men," suggesting that the NSPCC Inspector is not constituted merely by his training, but by the kind of man he is, by his character.

As the section on "What Eyes should see" goes on to suggest, however, "Good servants are both born and made, but they are more made than born" (9). That is, although the *Inspector's Directory* suggests that the cruelty man must be a particular kind of man, it also suggests that the work of the directory and of the NSPCC's training is to create these "good servants" who will see children "before everything else" (9), and who will give their hearts "to the child" (8). To be a proper cruelty man, according to the directory, demands a transformation from the inside out, and instructions as to method and as to proper manliness are represented as one and the same: "Stand well up to the child. Keep your heart well to the front. Don't seem official to it; be nothing but a man – a strong, tender man" (9-10). Here, instructions as to how to approach a child, and specific details of stance and posture are combined with instructions as to personal character, indicating that only a combination of the two can truly elicit the necessary responses from frightened children. And again, in the injunction that "What is going on in the house to a child there may be seen by intenseness of anxiety in a man of trained common sense" (12), emotion and education go hand in hand. Training in manliness, and in proper care and "anxiety" for the child, are not separated from training in procedure and method. Instead, the two are shown to be mutually supportive, and mutually necessary: a man who is a "good servant" of children will be both a "strong, tender man" and a disciplined adherent of NSPCC method.

The "Inspector's Directory" makes it very clear, therefore, that the NSPCC perceived the work of the Inspector to be more than a job, more even than a vocation: it is a calling to which one must give one's whole heart and mind, because "everything depends upon the disposition and bent of your life" (7). Throughout the directory, the Inspector is exhorted to *feel* above all, to be motivated by restlessness and anxiety for the child's welfare. He is told that "The best exponent of an Act is not a lawyer, but your own restless, patient, tenacious, intelligent love of a child" (8), and that "Nervous anxiety to get at the whole case – not simply to get up a case – is the first condition of true, complete success for the child" (11). How the Inspector feels about a case is at least as

important as how he goes about constructing it, as he must have "anxiety as to detail" (11), but more importantly, "passion" for the child's well-being (11). And at all times, even when confronted and opposed, he must "practice all the arts of a pure and high intention" (12). Again, the combination of training, suggested by the word "practice," and of inherent qualities of mind, "a pure and high intention," suggest that, indeed, the cruelty man must be *both* "born" and "made," both called to his position and rigorously trained to undertake it. Given that these instructions appear at the very beginning of the directory, before the "General Information for Inspectors" that records the actual details of the inspector's investigative work, it is clear that the NSPCC perceived these instructions as to how an Inspector should feel, and as to what should motivate him, as the primary lessons to be learned. Such instructions suggest that the Inspector is meant to internalize the NSPCC's training, to make himself into a product of that training to the extent that it becomes second nature, and training and feeling become one and the same.

The moral character of the Inspector was therefore a crucial component of the position. Given the rigours of the job, and the lack of material benefits that went with it, however, the NSPCC's acknowledged desire for "candidates in whom 'tenderness' was tempered by a 'righteous' anger over misuse of the young" (Behlmer 164) is hardly surprising. NSPCC inspectors in 1901 were paid only 30s. a week (with a possibility of merit increases up to 50s. a week), and although such wages did not put them in the ranks of the desperately poor, they also did not make the position a particularly remunerative one.[2] Furthermore, inspectors were expected to work "occasional Sunday and night duty with extra remuneration" and the Society did not "recognise overtime" (NSPCC, *Inspector's Directory* 13). Finally, although the Society acknowledged that the "difficult and trying character of an Inspector's work" (13) should earn him "great sympathy generally" (13), it also warned that "Habits about which ordinary employers might be indifferent the Society considers grounds for dismissal" (13).[3] The ideological capital imbued in the position of Inspector, the manliness that such a position was meant to entail and represent, may have served to offset the sheer difficulty of the job itself, replacing material rewards with the "nobleness of [the Inspector's] calling" (12).

Noble though the Inspector's calling might be, it was a position that entailed both an exhausting number of homes for which he was responsible,[4] and voluminous amounts

of paper work that had to be carefully and meticulously prepared. That is, while the handbook opens by carefully stressing the quality of mind and nobility of being required for the position, the remainder of the directory makes very clear that the position is strictly constituted by the Society, and by the regulations pertaining to it. The Inspector is instructed that he is required "to enter daily in his Diary the duties upon which he has been engaged" and that "The Diary is intended to be a minute record of an Officer's doings, and must be regularly kept, and produced for the Hon. Secretary's examination and signature at least once in every week" (17, underscore in original). As well, the Inspector "must always carry a pocket-book, and must be very careful to enter all facts elicited in connection with enquiries, and conversations with different witnesses, with their names and addresses. A well-kept note-book will ensure a well-written report" (18, underscore in original). There are detailed instructions as to how to go about writing reports, such as "A general statement, 'that the child is much neglected and dirty,' *is bad.* State specifically in what manner the child is neglected or dirty – whether superficially dirty or verminous" (36).

I mention these detailed instructions (which were to become even more detailed in the 1914 *Inspector's Directory*. While the 1901 edition consists of 50 pages, the 1914 edition is 110 pages, of which more than 50 pages alone is dedicated to "Inquiries and Reports"), not because such instructions are surprising, in and of themselves, but because no such details find a place within Walter Payne's *The Cruelty Man: Actual Experiences of an NSPCC Inspector, Graphically Told by Himself.*[5] In the "Foreword," Payne argues that "a generous and confiding public still knows little or nothing of the work they have set in motion, or the difficulties and dangers which beset those who engage actively in the work of social reformation" (8-9). This disclaimer is, of course, very much in keeping with the NSPCC party line, as evidenced by Robert J. Parr's "Preface," in which he states that "Misconception as to method and motive are met with every day by one or other of the Society's workers" (7). As a result of such misconceptions, Parr welcomes Payne's memoir, because "If what is being done for [children] by the Society's representatives became common knowledge, there would be little need to plead for further support for the Society" (7). Both Payne's and Parr's words suggest that this text will provide the reader with a detailed account of the "method and motive" of the Society, with a glimpse

of "the work they have set in motion." Payne, in turn, promises his reader that this "peep behind the scenes" of NSPCC work will be authoritative and true, and he will "attempt in the following pages to tell what I know and have seen. In those pages be it remembered nothing is recorded but *actual fact*" (9 original italics) and that "There has been no attempt to colour up the incidents up to the point of the picturesque" (9-10).

Such statements and claims bear a great similarity, and indeed, debt, to the kinds of claims about the Society's singular vision that Waugh had made throughout his work in *The Child's Guardian*. What is different about Payne's memoir, however, is that his stories are, as the opening chapter is titled, "Strictly Personal." That is, while Waugh always spoke on behalf of the NSPCC as an organization, Payne speaks from his own experience, and his stories are about him, his wife, "Mrs. Inspector," and the various children and parents he encounters in his work. Payne tells the reader about his background as "the son of a Sanitary Surveyor" (11), about his previous job experiences (11), and about moving his "wife, son and two daughters" to "an Assize town in Cobbleshire" (12) for his first position as an NSPCC Inspector. These details about Payne's personal life make him appear quite ordinary, so that he seems first to be simply a man, rather than a representative of an institution. But more importantly, Payne focuses, in the opening pages, upon his own naivete, saying that "I used to flatter myself that as a man of the world I knew most things worth knowing" (11), and that "I had preached the 'uplifting of the people' quite glibly; never dreaming … what a horrible stratum of misery there was below the surface of our much-vaunted civilization" (12). At the beginning of his narrative, Payne is as ignorant of the conditions of child-life in England as is (presumably) his reader, and his education as an NSPCC inspector, as related in the following chapters, promises also to be the education of his readers, who are given access (the narrative suggests) to what he sees, and thus able to learn as he himself learns.

Payne's stories, in other words, promise to narrativize the NSPCC as institution, converting statistics, classifications, and casepapers, the means by which the Society operates, into individual stories. The first episode, "The Cottage at the End," does this most clearly. When setting out to investigate what has been reported to him as an emergency, Payne informs the reader that

> One must – while exerting all speed, and prepared for any emergency – still preserve that open mind which is so necessary if one would get at the facts, and nothing but the facts, of the matter under enquiry. I was going to find out what had been done? Who did it? Why? Who saw it done? And after all this had been discovered, it was my duty still to preserve the balance between offender and child. (15)

Here, and at other points in his narrative,[6] Payne directly echoes the *Inspector's Directory*, which instructs inspectors to ask,

> (a) What was done?
> (b) Who did it?
> (c) Who to?
> (d) When?
> (e) Why?
> (f) Who saw it done? (NSPCC *Inspector's Directory*, 15)

Furthermore, the narrative that follows Payne's explanation of the steps he is expected to undertake dramatizes the way in which the Inspector goes about his work, as Payne details his efforts to gather a "chain of evidence" against an abusive mother, his success in finding a "possible reason" for the child's ill-treatment (18), and the instrument that caused the injuries (18-20). This story operates almost as an example of detective fiction, because it clearly demonstrates how the Inspector goes about finding evidence and interrogating witnesses and suspects so as to build a case. In a narrative such as this, the *Inspector's Directory* comes to life, and is transformed from a series of rules and regulations to a series of actions and interactions between inspector, child, and suspect.

After this story, however, method and procedure largely disappear from Payne's narratives. Instead, the work that Payne undertakes is always represented as that of exerting influence on those around him through the strength of his character, and through the persuasiveness of his manner. The reader is given the impression throughout of Payne as a stalwart, practical, stout-hearted veteran, who can speak to abusive parents in a language they will understand, and who will win the confidences of the most terrorized and wary child. When confronted by a violent father, for example, Payne confides to the

reader that "I was somewhat taken aback, and quite unprepared for this" (125). Payne decides, however, that

> for an officer to show the white feather in such an emergency would never do. So I raked up some of my past, and served it up for the benefit of my intending assailant:
>
> "Nothing I should enjoy so much, Jack! Since I had the gloves on with old Jem Mace, in 'seventy-nine – "
>
> "Jem Mace! Hev you had the gloves on wi' him, Inspector?"
>
> "Oh, yes! You see, I was going in for the Army middle weights at the time – "
>
> "You've been in the Army, and you've boxed."
>
> "Oh, yes! I used to love it as a youngster."
>
> "Then I'm noan feightin' thee, mister! You'd be too good for me!" I was very glad he thought so, and that we were able to talk over matters without resort to fisticuffs. (126)

Tales such as this are meant to win over the Inspector's reading audience, as we share in his anxiety at the prospect of a fight, and admire the craftiness of the Inspector (and deride the cowardice of the father) in the conversation that ensues. Furthermore, as a result of his courage, resourcefulness, and straight-talking manner, Payne claims he wins over the great majority of parents in these stories, for as he relates at the conclusion of one episode, "'Funny bloke, that Inspector,' the plumber said to a friend, after I'd gone away. 'He talks to a fellow like a pal, he do, and not like a bloomin' body-snatcher trying to get yer in quod!'" (154). Inspector Payne, rather than the representing the fearful cruelty man of early NSPCC rhetoric, is instead a "pal," one who manages confrontation through the strength of his character, rather than through the force of law.

The parents are also given distinct personalities in these stories, in a way they never are in the NSPCC's sample cases of the 90s in *The Child's Guardian*. The reader meets bullies, slatterns, drunkards, cowards, coal-miners, a dentist, and a prostitute, most of whom are given voices, names, and individual characteristics. Some of the parents are irredeemable, but most are capable of reform, and as a result, the most common ending to these stories is that of the parents' conversion. For example, Payne is forced to give a

warning to two habitual drunkards who are abusing their children, instructing them to "Work! until the reek of the filth is off your belongings, and the reek of the beer is off your own body! Then you needn't slink away when I call" (86). Payne's words to these parents recall Bolton's description of Nelly as being newly worthy of admiration, in that the threat he levels against these parents, rather than imprisonment, is that of continued shame. His admonition suggests instead that, through his influence, these parents could themselves become worthy of respect, and the effect of his admonition is proved by the father coming to "report another case": "'It's Billy Jones,' he said, 'my stall-mate at the pit, and one of those chaps I was boozing with that day. Put the fear o' God into him, sir! like you did into me – and he'll be a better father'" (87). Because the parents in Payne's text are capable of reformation, of becoming true and loving mothers and fathers, they are not flattened in the way that the "English savage" of early NSPCC rhetoric had been. They are given motivations (if poor ones) for their neglect of their children, and they are therefore comprehensible, rather than purely pathological. But more importantly, they are shown to be persuaded by the notion of respectability. This story is meant to represent, quite clearly, the power of the Inspector not simply as a figure of authority, as one that parents fear, but also as one by whom they wish to be respected.

Because both he and those he comes into contact with are fully-drawn characters, Payne's interactions with parents and children have the appearance of a series of relationships, of personal conversations between neighbours, rather than institutional interventions. Payne seems throughout, except when threatened or faced with unrepentant abusers, to be a kind-hearted father figure, who effects change in the lives of abusive parents by virtue of his charismatic presence and by the power of example. Rather than violently accosting parents, he instead models proper discipline: "I 'persuaded' him off the drink first. A severe shaking up – verbal, of course – effected that" (33). By using words instead of violence, Inspector Payne provides an example to these parents of the proper exertion of authority, an example very much in contrast to the violence these parents resort to against their children. Furthermore, Payne always represents himself as behaving respectfully towards others, even abusive others, because "It does not do to kick people too much when they are down" (85-6). And finally, he always takes full responsibility for the families he has had dealings with, taking an almost

familial interest in, particularly, the marriages of abusive parents. One abusive father, fearing a reunion with the wife and children he had terrorized before his imprisonment for abuse, says to Payne: "I've been waiting for a chance – to – to – ask if you'd be so good as to go with me on that errand" (111). While the wife's more-than-frosty greeting of her husband makes Payne question "whether the experiment would work for good or evil," he still comments to the reader that "separations are bad things at best," and when the wife asks him, "What do you say, Mr. Inspector," he declares, "I'd try him, this once!" (111). The wife's appeal to the Inspector, and her immediate acceptance of his decision, demonstrates that he has won over the respect of his clients, and that the relationship he has with them is a personal one, built by and through his actions and interactions with them. Payne's details of his interactions with parents and children throughout the narrative serve not only to elucidate the strengths of the Society's inspectorate, but also to model proper fatherhood, proper manliness, and proper working-class respectability. Payne is not just a model inspector; he is a model of what the NSPCC endeavours to create within the abusive home.

This text is more than a memoir, therefore; it is also a deliberate and conscious work of propaganda. Payne's narrative, with its first-person perspective, seems to offer the reader the kind of access that had been a feature of early London SPCC child abuse narratives, such as "The Story of the Shrewsbury Case": whereas that story, however, used fictional techniques to place the reader in the abusive home as witness, Payne's memoir provides the reader with the perspective of the Inspector. As such, his stories never challenge the authority of the NSPCC's sight, nor suggest that anyone but an NSPCC inspector can truly access or comprehend abuse. In fact, both Payne, and Parr, clearly state in their introductions to the text that these stories "are silhouettes, mere outlines; behind each there is pathos, drama, tragedy" (7) that is, presumably, beyond the reach of the common reader. Moreover, while each family appears individually drawn, Payne acknowledges that they are, in fact, "types": "Too much detail would doubtless weary the reader, so I have tried to make each story and each character a 'type'" (155). Payne's words here are revealing, because they disclose the extent to which his own experiences have been constructed for his audience. The word "type" is particularly important, because it suggests not just embellishment or edition for the sake of an

audience, "weary" or otherwise, but instead a desire to make visible the scope of the Society's work, and illustrate through example the classes of abuse and abusers the Society regularly encounters.

But if the parents are "types," it is also true that Payne himself is a "type." That is, the kind of man Payne represents himself to be is exactly the kind of man constructed by the *Inspector's Directory*. He is exemplary of the "strong, tender man" (NSPCC, *Inspector's Directory* 9-10) of the directory, who has given his whole heart "to the child" (8). When one boy protects his sisters by placing them behind him, Payne comments that "I shall always love little Billy (aged nine) for the manly way in which he stood up to me" (Payne 32), and after escorting a crippled child to the train-station to be sent to her new home, he remarks that Mrs. Inspector "declares I was sniveling too" (56). Payne might be a strong man who knows how to box, but he also isn't afraid to cry and to be moved by the children with whom he comes into contact. And in his interactions with parents, in which he always demonstrates his respectful manner toward them, Payne puts into action the NSPCC's instructions to never resort to "mere officialism or bounce" (*Inspector's Directory* 12) to gain the day, but instead use "Courtesy" that "has a wonderful effect" (12). Just as his stories narrativize the rules and procedures of the institution, so too does Payne himself enact the kind of Inspector constructed by the NSPCC's training and rhetoric.

By presenting cases and training as a series of personal encounters between individuals, however, Payne essentially makes invisible the NSPCC as institution. That is, the workings of the NSPCC's authority, and even the workings of the law, are largely absent from this memoir, and absent even in Payne's meetings with parents and children. As a result, Payne's text demonstrates the ways in which the workings of an institution can be obscured by the construction of "personal" relationships between parent and inspector. Rather than striking fear into a parent's heart with its name, as it had desired in the 1890s, the NSPCC in Payne's text instead seeks to be seen simply as a friend of the family – a friend that can punish certainly, but only when persuasion and respect fail to meet with the proper response. Such a stance is indicative, I would argue, of the greatly altered position of the NSPCC and of the project of child protection in the twentieth century. While in its early days, the London SPCC had represented itself as a fairly

radical organization, one that had to combat ignorance, mistrust, and even the laws of England so as to bring justice to the suffering child, by the time of Payne's memoir, the institution and the work that it performed had become somewhat naturalized. That is, even though the reader can certainly question the extent to which families actually welcomed or appreciated the work of the Inspector, it can at least be said that by the twentieth century, institutional involvement in family life had become a given.

But what of the abused child in Payne's text? Throughout this study, I have examined the suffering, endangered, and abused child in many manifestations, as either victim or threat, innocent or knowing, salvageable or irretrievably damaged. I have argued throughout that the rise to dominance of conceptions of the child as innocent, dependent, and at risk of violence led, perhaps inevitably, to the emergence of child protection at the end of the nineteenth century. This construction of the child is still very much present in Payne's early-twentieth century text, and though his child characters are not as silent as they were in the case studies printed in *The Child's Guardian*, they are, nevertheless, still important primarily for the ways in which they can be read by the adults around them, and for the effect they have upon that adult audience. But the meaning of the abused child is always the same: it always asks for help, for justice, and for the intervention of the inspector and of the law. In his story of "The Cottage at the End," for example, Payne writes of Nellie, who gazes at him "with a curious yearning expression on her face, as though half terrified at what was to come, and yet in some vague way knowing instinctively that it was for her good" (19). While the "as though" qualifies Payne's ability truly to know what goes on in this girl's mind, yet he is able to read her gaze as fully welcoming and sanctioning his authority within her home. And in the story of "Alfred – the Unwanted," Payne decides to trust the foreman of the jury, Mr. Cramp, despite the fact that he "is an old friend of the prisoner" because "Mr. Cramp had an honest English face. He would see the child and hear the evidence. No honourable man could resist the mute appeal in that youngster's eyes" (42). Here again, Alfred's eyes are eminently transparent, and eminently true. They ask for justice, and no one who looks into them, even someone who might be biased against him, can be mistaken as to the meaning of their gaze.

And if the abused child's eyes speak louder than words, then so too does the abused child's body. In one of the most disturbing narratives in the text, "A Babe in the Wood," Payne tells of a seven-year-old girl who loses her feet and legs to gangrene as a result of sleeping outside, with her mother, in the cold and frost. The story tells of the child's deposition, which begins "I am seven years old, and I see my mamma in the room sitting near the bed" (54), and which describes how the mother and the child had been "For some time past … tramping along the road," and staying "all night in the open" (54-55). It is evident from the deposition that the mother had never left the child's side, and that she had tried, by taking the child to a public-house, and by covering the child with bags to keep the child as warm as possible. The mother, however, unlike most parents with whom Payne interacts in the memoir, is never given any voice; instead, Payne asks the reader to "Think of it just a moment":

> The mother who had brought her into being had refused the shelter of her own home, the good advice of many friends, and had thrown up farm work, where she might have earned at least an honest living for herself and her child, to wilfully waste her life in wantonness and sin, and to drag this poor little mite from place to place, to suffer hunger and almost perish with cold. (56)

While these details purport to explain (or at least prove) the mother's cruelty, they fail to do so. Unlike his other narratives, this particular story leaves out a great deal, relying more on rhetoric, implication, and invective to make its case. It is the child's maimed body that provides the necessary evidence, that speaks most loudly to the mother's "willful" neglect and cruelty.

But if the child has failed to meet with the proper protection from her mother, she does, particularly after the loss of her legs, meet with it from everyone else. Payne proclaims "it was my privilege to carry this little rescued darling to safety and shelter" (56), a privilege others seem to want to share with him: "On the way to the train one could see the tears start from women's eyes, as they caught a glimpse of little Amy; strong men wished her 'God-speed' in thick voices as they pressed pennies or chocolates into her tiny hands" (56). Amy's rescue by an institution, to an institution – in which "kind hearts would soon take the place of a mother to her," after which "she would be

placed in some situation in life such as her deformed condition would allow" (56) – seems merely a natural extension of the concern her body elicits from all adults. Everyone who sees Amy wants to protect her, but the "privilege" of doing so is entrusted, in the end, to the Inspector.

The Inspector's privileged role in caring for the abused child is what makes me grant this figure such prominence at the end of a project that has focused almost exclusively on the endangered and abused child. The work of the NSPCC in "creating" the abused child at the end of the nineteenth century has had lasting impact on how a suffering child is perceived, and on what that suffering might mean. But it has also had lasting impact on the action we all believe should be taken on behalf of that child. In the end, we all now see a child's suffering through the eyes of the Inspector, wondering what has caused that suffering, who is to blame, and what can be done. But most importantly, we wonder who we can call, recognizing that the "privilege" of ameliorating that suffering is not in our hands. The story of the abused child today is that of trusting the institutions we have put in place to take care of that child, instead of asking what it is that suffering child might mean outside the parameters of those institutions.

Notes

[1] NSPCC inspectors were male. The first female inspector was hired in 1915 (NSPCC, *A History* 4); many of the NSPCC's inspectors were called to serve during World War I, and "Their wives, who had traditionally supported the Inspectors from behind the scenes, stepped in to fill vacant posts" (4).

[2] As Behlmer notes, however, "The job carried other compensations .... At the turn of the century between 80 and 90 percent of the agents and their families lived in the NSPCC's local offices. Resident inspectors sometimes paid no rent, though more often they contributed five shillings a week for their rooms and in return got a weekly allowance of one shilling and sixpence for coals, gas light, and a charwoman" (164).

[3] These "grounds for dismissal" could pertain to an injunction within the *Inspector's Directory* that "Inspectors must not frequent public-houses, or bad company, or bet, or gamble" (13).

[4] As Behlmer notes,

> The need to patrol immense areas complicated an already complex job. When Inspector W. Payne arrived at the assize town of Stafford in 1903, he was confronting a district of some five hundred square miles. It took Payne several days of cycling to survey the terrain of farms, small towns, and colliery villages surrounding his branch office. The society declared it "a fact of experience" that one inspector could not deal effectively with an urban population greater than 100,000 .... The NSPCC did admit, however, that as late as 1907 sixteen branches retained only one agent each to patrol areas with more than 250,000 inhabitants. (166)

[5] Originally published anonymously.

[6] In "The Collier's Little Housekeeper," for example, Payne writes that "Emergencies are superior to all rules" (127), a direct paraphrase from the directory: "As to 'emergencies,' in all cases the interests of a child are superior to rules" (21).

A Photograph enlarged by the Stereoscopic Company.

AS HE WAS FOUND.

Gently air sticked [illegible]

From a Photograph [illegible]

TWO YEARS [illegible]

Figure 1

Figure 2

Figure 3

Unlearned.

A LITTLE NORTHAMPTON GIRL
YOU HAVE HELPED.

Learned.

Figure 4

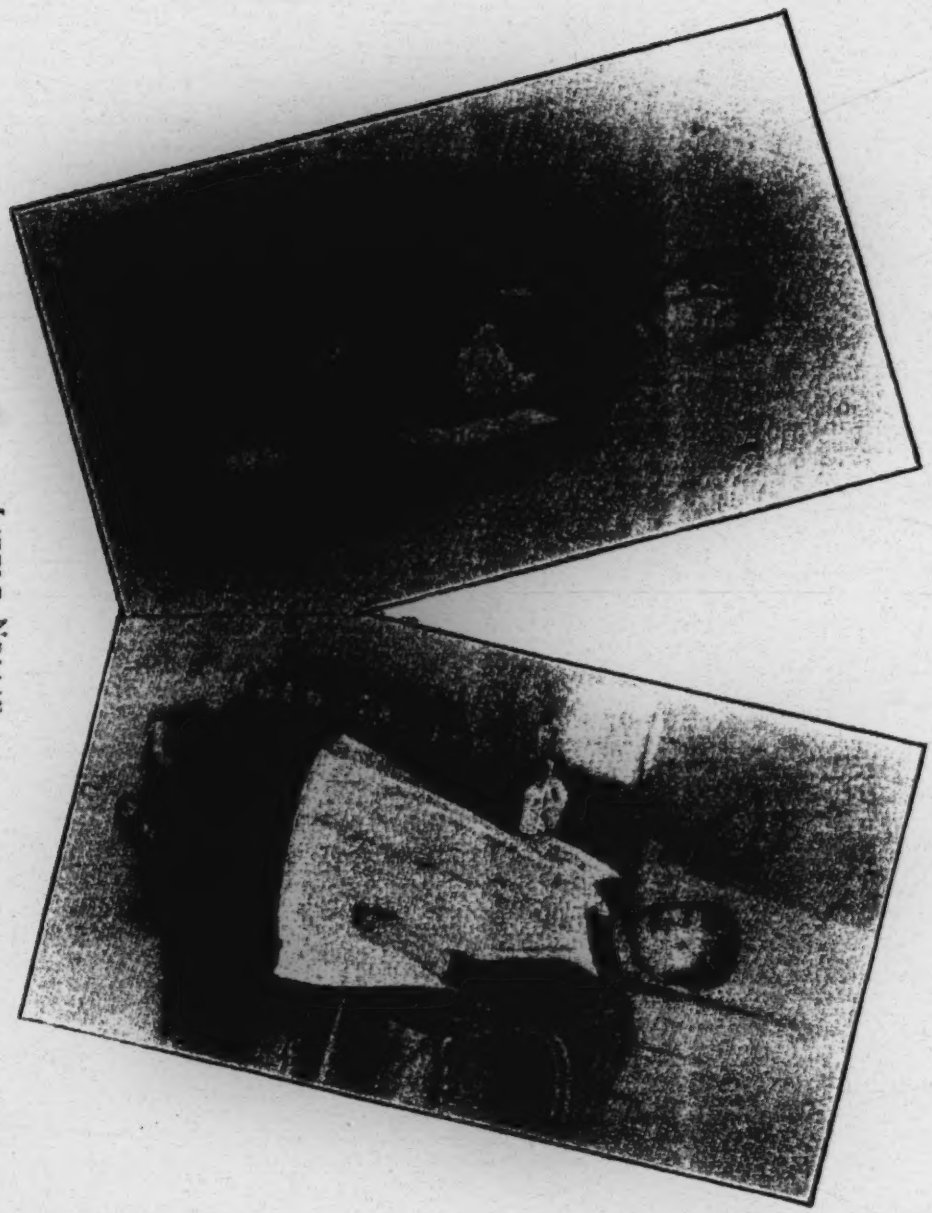

Figure 5

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